DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD

VICTOR APPLETON

To Charlie from ma.

Christmas

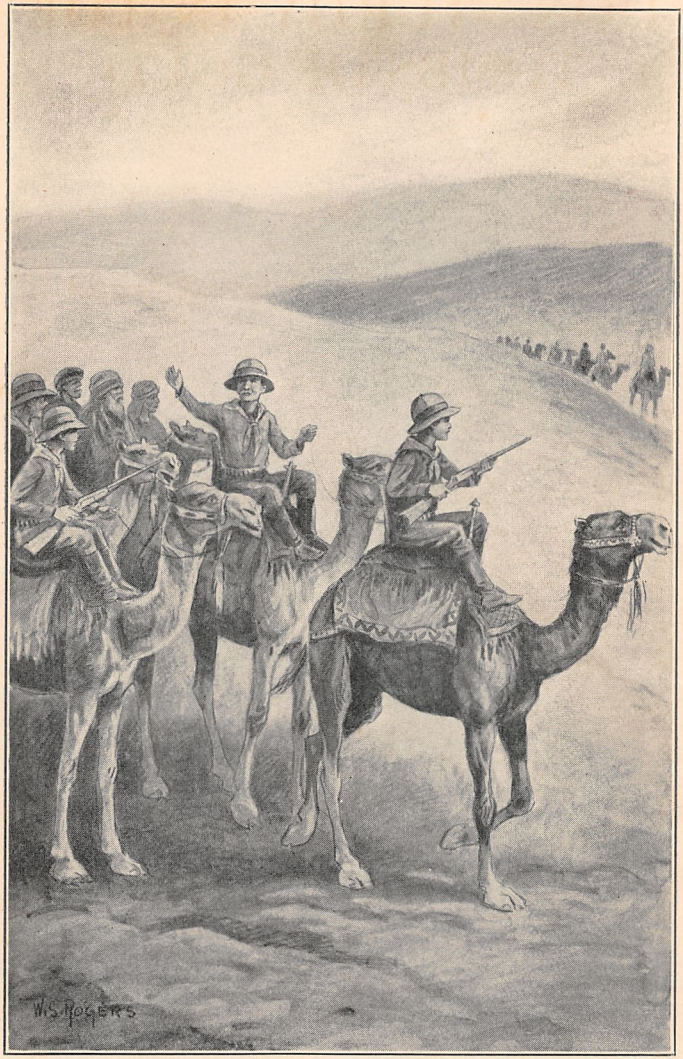
1927

Book No. 14.

Buddy

Brother

Vernon



"GET YOUR RIFLES READY," COMMANDED THE CAPTAIN.
Don Sturdy in the Tombs of Gold. *Page* 132

DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD

OR

The Old Egyptian's Great Secret

BY

VICTOR APPLETON

AUTHOR OF "DON STURDY ON THE DESERT OF MYSTERY," "DON STURDY ACROSS THE NORTH POLE," "TOM SWIFT AND HIS SKY RACER," "TOM SWIFT AND HIS PHOTO TELEPHONE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

WALTER S. ROGERS

NEW YORK
GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS

Made in the United States of America

BOOKS FOR BOYS

By VICTOR APPLETON

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

THE DON STURDY SERIES

DON STURDY ON THE DESERT OF MYSTERY
DON STURDY WITH THE BIG SNAKE HUNTERS
DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD
DON STURDY ACROSS THE NORTH POLE
DON STURDY IN THE LAND OF VOLCANOES

THE TOM SWIFT SERIES

TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR CYCLE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRSHIP
TOM SWIFT AND HIS SUBMARINE BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RUNABOUT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIRELESS MESSAGE
TOM SWIFT AMONG THE DIAMOND MAKERS
TOM SWIFT IN THE CAVES OF ICE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS SKY RACER
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RIFLE
TOM SWIFT IN THE CITY OF GOLD
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR GLIDER
TOM SWIFT IN CAPTIVITY
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIZARD CAMERA
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GREAT SEARCHLIGHT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GIANT CANNON
TOM SWIFT AND HIS PHOTO TELEPHONE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AERIAL WARSHIP
TOM SWIFT AND HIS BIG TUNNEL
TOM SWIFT IN THE LAND OF WONDERS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WAR TANK
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR SCOUT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS UNDERSEA SEARCH
TOM SWIFT AMONG THE FIRE FIGHTERS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS FLYING BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GREAT OIL GUSHER
TOM SWIFT AND HIS CHEST OF SECRETS

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

Copyright, 1925, by
GROSSET & DUNLAP

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	A Call For Help	1
II	Like a Voice From the Grave	10
III	Off For Egypt	18
IV	A Pair Of Scoundrels	27
V	A Villainous Plot	36
VI	The Fight In the Dark	46
VII	On the Trail	63
VIII	A Land Of Wonders	77
IX	Startling News	86
X	In Great Danger	95
XI	A Dash For Liberty	103
XII	The Night Prowler	115
XIII	A Deadly Menace	127
XIV	In Utter Darkness	138
XV	A Frightful Apparition	144
XVI	In the Grip Of Doom	149
XVII	Trapped	155

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVIII	A Night Of Horror	162
XIX	The Man By the Stream	168
XX	A Joyful Reunion	177
XXI	In the Labyrinth	182
XXII	A Bewildering Experience	188
XXIII	Riches Beyond Price	193
XXIV	The Sleepwalker	198
XXV	Victory Against Odds	207

DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD

CHAPTER I

A Call for Help

"Then, you think Dad really went to Egypt?" asked Don Sturdy, with deep anxiety in his tone, as he stood beside the desk where his uncle, Professor Bruce, was carefully looking over a mass of papers.

"I'm inclined to think so, my boy," replied the professor, as he sat back in his chair and ran his fingers through his hair. "Everything seems to point that way, though we haven't a bit of positive proof. But we know, at least, that the idea of going there was in his mind when he rushed out of Clifton's house in Brazil shouting that he must go to Egypt."

"Still, that may have been the mere whim of a deranged mind, forgotten almost as soon as the words were spoken," put in Captain Frank Sturdy, another of Don's uncles, as he turned from the window through which he had been looking.

"True enough," assented the professor. "But we know from what Ruth told us that for weeks he had been talking about the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. It was, I believe, a fixed idea that had taken possession of him. And these papers I've been looking over explain why he was so deeply interested in that country."

He picked up the heap of manuscript as he spoke, and selected some papers from the mass.

"There's no collected story here," he remarked; "simply a lot of memoranda scribbled on whatever he had at hand, old telegraph blanks, backs of envelopes, and the like. They bear upon a trip that Richard took to Egypt several years ago. The magic of the country seems to have captivated him. But there's something more than the awakened interest of a tourist in them. They're aflame with the ardor of a discoverer. He seems to have been right on the brink of some remarkable find—so remarkable, in fact, that he feared to commit it to paper lest it should get into hands for which it was not intended."

"I remember now," broke in Captain Sturdy, "that when he got back from that trip he seemed strangely excited. But I could never get much out of him about it. He'd talk about it in a general way, but whenever it came to details he'd change the subject. I gathered

that he meant to go back the next year, but the war came and that put an end to his plans for the time."

"He seemed to have spent most of his time among the tombs," resumed the professor. "There is one he mentions that was fifty-two feet long, thirty-one feet wide, the sides of which were entirely covered with paintings, while the roof, twenty-four feet high, was adorned with a hundred squares of over a dozen different designs. There's a diagram of it here."

"What do you gather from that?" asked the captain.

"Nothing much in itself," was the reply. "But at the end of the description are the words: 'This is not the one. Must look further.' And there are several other descriptions of tombs scattered through the papers, each with this little note of disappointment at the end. It seems clear to me that Richard was hunting eagerly for one particular tomb and desperately anxious to find it."

"What for, do you suppose?" asked Don.

"What he wanted to find it for or what he expected to find in it I don't know. It may have been gold or scarabs or alabaster vases or amulets or any of the thousand things that make some of those tombs veritable treasure houses. But whatever it was, his mind was centered on it. It may have become a sort of

obsession. Then, when his head was hurt in that accident at the time of the shipwreck, that one overpowering desire to get back to Egypt may have come to the front and been too strong to be resisted."

"Even if he did go there," said Don, in perplexity, "it's strange that nothing has been heard of him. He had to live somewhere, must have registered at some hotel. Yet all the consuls in the various cities have investigated and can find no traces of any one named Sturdy."

"He may have used some other name," suggested the professor. "It's quite possible that he'd forgotten his own. Cases of amnesia are common enough, when a man forgets all his past history, even his name."

"But if mother had been with him, she'd have set that all right," objected Don.

"True enough," replied the professor. "But how do we know that she was with him? All we know is that she ran out after him into the night. We cannot be sure that he didn't elude her."

"Oh, shall we ever be able to solve the mystery?" cried Don, in desperation.

"Yes, we will," declared the captain heartily, as he placed his hand encouragingly on his nephew's shoulder. "Keep up your heart, my boy. Remember that we found your sister Ruth when we had almost given up hope. And

with heaven's help we'll find your father and mother too."

"To be sure we shall, even if we go to Egypt to do it," chimed in the professor. "We'll rake that country with a fine-toothed comb before we'll give up and admit that we're beaten."

The sound of the dinner bell broke up the conference, and Don hastened to his room to wash and to brush his hair.

They were served at table by Jennie Jenks, the maid of all work, who in her flittings to and fro that afternoon had caught snatches of the conversation and was bursting with the desire to impart it to Mrs. Roscoe, the housekeeper of the Sturdy home.

"I guess we kin say good-bye to Mister Don an' his uncles," she remarked, in one of her migrations to the kitchen. "They're all a goin' to the tomb."

Mrs. Roscoe was so startled that she nearly dropped the dish she was carrying from the oven.

"What do you mean?" she gasped. "Are they sick?"

"You wouldn't think so if you seen the way they was eatin'," replied Jennie, shifting her wad of chewing gum. "I mean they're goin' to them Egypt tombs, where they's alligaster vases an' omelets an' things like that."

"Oh, you mean the tombs of the Pharaohs,"

said the motherly housekeeper, in great relief. "They've been dead a long time."

"Mebbe," admitted Jennie. "Though I hadn't even heard they was sick. But it just beats all the way them men go trampin' all over the earth when they got a good home like this. Here they jest got back from Brazil, an' lucky they was not to be et up by golcondas or cannonballs, an' instead of settlin' down, thankful like, they must be goin' off lickety-switch to another of them heathen places. Who knows what'll happen to 'em? Like as not Mister Don may fall down into one of them Egypt tombs an' be squashed."

"Oh, I guess not," replied the housekeeper soothingly. "He's been in a good many tight places and has come through all right."

"Yes," admitted Jennie. "But the picture that goes to the well too often is broke at last. An' it jest makes my blood creep to think of them goin' to that Egypt place, where all them plagues used to be."

"That was a long time ago," remarked the housekeeper. "I guess it's all right now."

"I don't know," said Jennie, renewing her attack on her chewing gum more vigorously and shaking her head. "From all I've heard, them Egyptians ain't any better than they ort to be."

"Who is?" asked Mrs. Roscoe mildly.

"A feller took me to a movie once that

showed all 'bout Egypt," went on Jennie, ignoring the question. "The big buildings was so dark an' gloomy they give me the shivers. I ast the feller why they didn't have electric lights, an' he tole me that they didn't need electric lights coz they had so many Israelites. I ast him what they had to do with it, an' he only laughed an' said he loved every bone in my head."

"He had a lot to love, then," put in Mrs. Roscoe dryly.

"An' they was a picture of the ocean," Jennie continued, oblivious of the sarcasm, "an' the feller that was with me tole me that was Pharaoh an' his chariots an' the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea. I said, 'Where's the children of Israel, I don't see any,' an' he said, 'Oh, they've gone over'; an' I said, 'Well, then, where's Pharaoh and his chariots?' an' he said, 'Oh, they've gone under.' I s'pose that was the way of it since he said so, but it didn't seem just right somehow."

Just then Jennie was interrupted by a call from the dining room and scurried away, saving the housekeeper the necessity of listening to any further details for the moment.

Don finished his dinner and then went out and sat down in a chair on the porch. It was a beautiful summer evening, and in the great old trees about the house the birds were singing their vesper songs.

Ordinarily the charm of the hour would have appealed to Don, but now the outer peace only helped to emphasize by contrast the ferment of anxiety in his mind. Where was his father? Where was his mother? Were they still alive? What fate was keeping him without tidings of his parents, dearer to him than life?

A boy on a motorcycle came at a rapid gait up the road. Don looked at him listlessly as he neared, but with quickened interest when he stopped at the gate.

The messenger opened the gate and wheeled his machine up the path.

"Cap'n Sturdy in?" asked the boy.

"Yes," replied Don. "Want to see him?"

"Got a cablegram for him," was the answer.

"Uncle Frank!" called Don. "Will you step here a minute? Something for you."

The captain came to the door, carrying in his hand the evening newspaper he had been reading.

"What is it?" he asked.

The messenger handed him the envelope he drew from his pocket. The captain signed for it and tore it open.

He ran his eyes over the message, and gave a shout that brought Don to his feet in a twinkling.

"What is it?" he asked in surprise and some alarm. "What's the matter?"

"Read it! Read it!" cried the captain, shov-

ing the message toward his nephew with a hand that trembled.

Don looked at it, and started as though he had received an electric shock.

"It's from mother!" he cried. "It's from mother!"

This was the way the message ran:

"Strange disappearance of Richard. Must have assistance. Cable immediately.

"ALICE STURDY."

CHAPTER II

Like a Voice from the Grave

"From mother!" shouted Don. "She's alive! A cablegram from mother!"

He kissed the precious message and pressed it to his heart. Happy tears were in his eyes. The captain was scarcely less stirred.

The commotion brought the professor hurrying to the porch, as well as Don's sister Ruth, who, not yet fully recovered from her long illness, stood like a frail lily, framed in the doorway.

"What is it, Don?" she asked, clasping her hands beseechingly. "I heard you say something about mother? What has happened?"

Don sprang to her side and led her to a chair, where he seated her tenderly.

"Good news, Ruth, glorious news!" he cried. "We have a message from mother. She's alive! Think of it, Ruth! Mother's alive and we're going to see her soon!"

Ruth's head drooped on his breast and she fell into a passion of weeping. They let her cry to her heart's content, knowing they were

tears that could bring balm and blessing. The captain turned away, and the professor, to conceal his emotion, blew his nose vigorously.

The paroxysm passed, and Ruth, her eyes shining through her tears, looked at Don.

"What about Dad?" she asked.

Don's face clouded.

"That news isn't so good," he answered. "Mother says that he has mysteriously disappeared. But we'll find him, never fear. And, anyway, we know that he is still alive—or was up to within a very short time. When is that cablegram dated, Uncle Frank?"

"This morning," answered the captain, "and it comes from Alexandria. That shows that they both reached Egypt from Brazil. It's probable that Richard has been missing for a day or two only, or Alice would have cabled sooner. I wish she had gone more into details. But those will come later," he added.

"She has probably been short of money, and cable tolls are expensive," suggested the professor.

"We'll soon settle the money question!" exclaimed the captain. "Dan," he called to the man of all work, who, together with Mrs. Roscoe and Jenny, had been called out by the excitement and stood near by, "get out the car at once and drive me down to the village. I'll cable her a thousand dollars to-night, and tell

her we're coming to her by the first steamer we can get."

Dan hurried away to the garage, while the captain went into the house to get his hat.

"Come into the house, my blessed lamb," said Mrs. Roscoe, her own face wet with happy tears, as she folded Ruth in her motherly embrace and led her inside.

"My poor dear Missus!" blubbered Jenny, as she followed them. "All alone out there in the land of the Pigamids and the Spinach!"

"I'm going with you, Uncle Frank!" cried Don, as Dan brought the car up to the door.

"Jump in," said the captain, as he set the example. Dan threw in the clutch and the car whirled out of the gate.

While uncle and nephew are speeding to respond to that call for help from faraway Egypt, it may be well, for the benefit of those who have not read the preceding volumes of this series, to tell who Don Sturdy was and what had been his adventures up to the time this story opens.

Don was a lad of fourteen, unusually tall and muscular for his age, with brown hair and eyes and a fair complexion. He had been born and brought up in Hillville, a thriving town in an Eastern state, about fifty miles from New York. The Sturdy house was of stone, as were the barn, garage and other outbuildings, sur-

rounded by several acres of ground set out with large trees.

Some time before the beginning of the events here narrated, Don's father, Richard Sturdy, a great traveler, had set out on an exploring expedition, accompanied by his wife, Alice, and by his daughter, Ruth, who was about two years younger than Don. No word came from them, nor did the ship *Mercury* on which they had embarked reach port, and with the passage of time it began to be feared that the *Mercury* had gone down with all on board while rounding Cape Horn. The blow was a terrible one to Don, who dearly loved his parents and younger sister, and drove him nearly frantic with grief.

During his parents' absence, Don had been left in the care of his uncle on his father's side, Captain Frank Sturdy, his official guardian, a big game hunter of great repute, whose business of gathering animals dead and alive for museums and menageries had taken him at times all over the world. He was a big man of iron nerve, sinewy, with black hair and eyes. He was a dead shot, and his instructions had made Don also a marksman only second to himself.

Don was also under the general oversight of Professor Amos Regor Bruce, his uncle on his mother's side, and an eminent scientist and member of many learned societies. He also

had traveled extensively in the interest of museums, for whom he gathered rare archæological specimens.

To divert Don's mind from dwelling on his supposed loss, his uncles, both of whom were bachelors, took him with them on a trip to the Sahara Desert. There one adventure trod quickly on the heels of another. Don rescued a boy of about his own size, Teddy Allison, from the attack of thievish Arabs. It developed that Teddy's father had been captured and carried into slavery. The sympathies of Don and his uncles were enlisted by the boy's plight, and they organized an auto expedition into the desert to find Mr. Allison and incidentally to discover, if they could, the City of Brass and the Cave of Emeralds. What difficulties they had to surmount; the encounters they had with bandits; the thrilling circumstances attending the rescue of Mr. Allison and their finding of the emeralds are told in the first volume of this series, entitled: "Don Sturdy on the Desert of Mystery; or, Autoing in the Land of the Caravans."

Don's astonishment and delight may be imagined when he learned from Mr. Allison that, though the *Mercury* had indeed been shipwrecked, a number of passengers on the ill-fated ship had been picked up by a sailing vessel and carried to Brazil. Teddy's father had heard the story from others of the rescued

party, a scientist and a sailor, who were presumably somewhere in Brazil, though he did not know their exact whereabouts. Don's hopes that his parents and sister might have been among the survivors were revived, and he and his uncles determined to go to that great South American country, a project rendered the easier by the fact that the captain had a contract to capture big snakes and the professor wished to go to the same region to search for rare drugs.

Before long their expedition was organized and they had plunged into the wilds of Brazil. Here they had the most exciting adventures with anacondas, boa constrictors, alligators and jaguars, and were many times in peril of their lives.

How they captured the hideous monsters of the jungle; how they followed up traces of Don's parents and sister and finally found Ruth in a hospital and brought her back to America; how they were baffled by the perplexing mystery that still clung about the movements of Don's father and mother, are fully narrated in the second volume of this series, entitled: "Don Sturdy with the Big Snake Hunters; or, Lost in the Jungles of the Amazon."

Now to return to Don, as, with his heart thumping against his ribs with joy and excitement, he accompanied his uncle to Hillville in

order to send the message that would bring relief and assurance to his mother's heart.

Cable tolls were a matter of no consequence to the captain, and he sent a long message to his sister-in-law, full of love and sympathy and encouragement, accompanied by a telegraphic order for a thousand dollars and directions to draw on him for all she needed to any amount. He told her also that Ruth was safe at home, and that he and the professor and Don would be on their way to her by the first steamer on which they could secure passage.

"Well, that's that!" exclaimed the captain, when he had finished and again climbed into the car. "Now to be up at daybreak and on my way to New York to make arrangements for our passage. You've got to hustle now, my boy, to get ready."

"Ready?" cried Don. "I'm ready now. I'd like to start off this minute."

"So should I," replied his uncle. "But a trip half-way around the world can't be taken at the drop of a hat. We'll make things hum though, you can be sure of that."

"How long will the voyage take?"

"Three weeks, probably. Possibly a little less if we make good connections. We'll have to go to England first, and book passage on a liner from there. But they run frequently, and we won't have long to wait."

It was getting dark as they drew near the

Sturdy home. In the dusk Don saw two figures walking by the side of the road whom he recognized at once. He called to Dan to stop, and the car halted abreast of them.

"Hello, Emily! Hello, Fred!" Don called out. "Jump in. Where are you going?"

"Just coming over to make you a little call," replied Fred Turner, a boy of about Don's own age.

"Better and better!" exclaimed Don. "Get in. I have some glorious news, and if I don't tell it to some one I'll burst!"

CHAPTER III

Off for Egypt

"It would be too bad to have anything like that happen, Don," was the laughing reply of Fred, as he helped his sister into the car and followed her. "So fire away and let's have it."

"Oh, you don't mean, Don, that you've heard from your parents?" asked Emily eagerly. "I can't imagine anything else that would make you so happy."

"It's just that!" declared Don jubilantly. "Got a cablegram from my mother. She's in Egypt, and we're going right over there to get her and bring her home."

Emily gave a little squeal of delight and Fred grabbed Don's hand with a fervor that made him wince.

"Glory hallelujah!" cried Fred. "Isn't that splendid!"

"Oh, Don, I'm so glad and thankful!" exclaimed Emily. "Now Ruth will get well in a hurry. It's just that awful worry that's made her so weak and ill. How did she take it?"

"Too happy for words," replied Don. "It

will do her more good than all the tonics and medicines in the world."

"Your father is with your mother, I suppose," remarked Fred.

"No," replied Don slowly, his tone tinctured with soberness. "That's the one bad thing in the news. He's disappeared, and mother doesn't know where he is. We're going over to hunt him up. But at least we know that he was alive nearly up to the time she cabled, and that's a whole lot in itself."

By this time the car had reached the house. Captain Sturdy went inside to discuss the coming trip with Professor Bruce. Don and Fred sat down on the porch, while Emily rushed inside to rejoice with Ruth over her new-found happiness.

Fred and Emily Turner were orphans, who lived at a little distance from the Sturdy home. Their first acquaintance with Don dated from the time just before his journey to Brazil when Don had saved Emily from a raging torrent into which she had fallen. Fred at that time was badly crippled, so badly, in fact, that his recovery seemed hopeless. The orphans were also in bad financial circumstances, and the small estate in stocks and bonds that had been left them by their father had been taken from them by a heartless swindler.

A warm friendship sprang up between Don and the young folks, and the former enlisted

the help of his uncles in their behalf. The story of what was done for the Turners by Professor Bruce and Captain Sturdy and how Fred was cured of his lameness and made as strong and well as other lads of his age has been narrated in the preceding volume.

Don and Fred had been chatting for a few minutes on the porch when the telephone bell rang. Don excused himself and went inside to answer it.

"Hello!" came the call. "Is that you, Don? This is Brick."

"Bully!" cried Don, as he realized that his caller was Teddy Allison, nicknamed Brick because of his mop of fiery red hair. "I've been wondering why I hadn't heard from you."

"Been plugging away at my books," growled Brick. "But vacation will be here in a few days now, and I'm going to make tracks to Hillville just as soon as I can get away. I'm crazy to hear all about your trip to Brazil."

"You haven't been any crazier than I've been to have you come," replied Don. "But, Brick, old boy, I'm afraid I won't be here when your vacation begins. I'm going to Egypt."

There was an exclamation at the other end of the wire as though Brick had been stunned. Don went on to explain the good news he had received and Teddy was overjoyed.

"It's glorious, Don!" he said. "It's the best news I've heard in months. But, say, Don,

if you're going to Egypt, why can't I go along?"

"That would be great," responded Don enthusiastically. "I'd be tickled to death. And I'm sure my uncles would have no objection. You know what they think of you. They think you're about the finest boy that ever wore shoes. But how about your father? Would he be willing to have you go?"

"He isn't in New York, worse luck," replied Brick. "He's gone out West on a business matter. But I'll try to get him by telegraph or long distance 'phone. Oh, Don, I've just got to go with you! I'll go if I have to swim!"

"Pretty long swim," laughed Don. "But do your best, old boy, and I'll talk to my uncles; though I'm sure they'll be willing."

The boys talked for a few minutes longer, and then Don hung up the receiver and rejoined Fred on the porch.

"From Brick Allison," he explained. "He's wild to go with us to Egypt."

"I don't wonder," commented Fred. "But now, Don," he went on, rising as Emily came out on the porch, "I guess we'd better go, for I know you'll have a thousand things to do in getting ready for your trip on such short notice."

The next few days were busy ones. Clothes suitable for the hot climate of Egypt had to be bought, arrangements made for letters of

credit, passages booked on the steamer, and a host of other details attended to that had to be crowded into their hurried preparations.

The captain and professor kept the wires hot in their calls on the various shipping offices, and were delighted to find that they could get passage on a steamer going directly to Alexandria in Egypt, thus obviating the necessity of going to England first, an arrangement that would save them several days. At a time when every day counted, this was an item of prime importance.

No answering cable had come from Mrs. Sturdy, a fact that increased their uneasiness and gave an added intensity to their longing to be off.

Nor had Teddy 'phoned again, except once to tell Don that he was trying frantically to get in touch with his father but had not yet succeeded. But no other message followed, and Don was forced reluctantly to give up hope of his boy friend taking the trip with him.

The day came at last when they were to go to New York, there to board the *Cleopatra,* the vessel on which their passage was booked. There were tender partings from Ruth, in whose cheeks the roses were again coming from the knowledge that her mother was alive. They promised to keep in frequent touch with her by cable.

There were warm good wishes also from

Dan and Mrs. Roscoe and Jenny. The hired girl's agitated feelings were revealed by the unusual vigor with which she chewed her gum.

"Good-bye, Mister Don," she whimpered. "Don't get trompled by no cambles an' don't get et by no crockumdiles an' don't fall down in none of them Egypt tombs."

Don promised that he would be careful, and the party stepped into the car and were driven down by Dan to the station, where they took the train to New York.

The *Cleopatra* was to sail the next morning at eleven, and two hours earlier Don and his uncles went on board. The ship was new and well equipped, their staterooms were favorably located and satisfactorily furnished, and to all appearance they would have a comfortable and, they hoped, a speedy voyage.

Don quickly arranged his belongings in his cabin and then went out on deck, which was humming with the activity always prevailing on a steamer on the point of sailing. He hung over the rail looking eagerly for one particular face among the many that thronged the pier. In his last talk with Teddy he had told him of the steamer he would take and the day and hour of sailing, and he confidently expected that his chum would be on hand to see him off.

But Teddy did not appear, and when at last the gangplank was drawn in and the great vessel edged her way out into the river, Don turned

away with a feeling of disappointment. What on earth had kept his friend from being on hand? It was not like Teddy to fail him in anything.

But though a sore spot remained in his heart, the first days of the voyage were full of interesting things to engross his attention. The weather was fine, and he spent most of the time on deck, enjoying the cool breezes, the never ending fascination of the ocean, and studying his fellow passengers.

These last embraced more varied types than usual, because many of them were natives of countries that bordered on the Mediterranean and were clad in the picturesque garb of their various lands. There were many Greeks, Algerians, Tunisians and Egyptians, the latter of whom were of special interest because of the preëminent place that Egypt held in his thoughts.

Three whose dress proclaimed that they belonged to the land of the Nile particularly attracted his notice.

One was an elderly man of benevolent expression, with deep piercing eyes peering out from beneath shaggy eyebrows. He seemed a sage and a scholar, rich in wisdom and experience. Don instinctively liked him without exactly knowing why. His name, as the boy ascertained from one of the deck stewards, was Zata Phalos.

Two other Egyptians, who, as Don learned from the same source, bore the names of Tezra and Nepahak, aroused in Don a feeling of suspicion and distrust. They were always together, and usually conversing in low tones, as though fearing to be overheard. From glances they cast frequently at Phalos, accompanied by a vindictive glitter, Don judged that the latter was the subject of their conversation.

Tezra was tall and stoop-shouldered, while Nepahak was fat, short and oily. Don noticed that Tezra did most of the talking, while Nepahak assented by nods or objected in monosyllables. Tezra was apparently the dominant character of the two. To Don, the faces of both bore the stamp of evil.

"Those birds will bear watching," Don muttered to himself. "I'd hate to be at their mercy if they had an object in injuring me."

On the third afternoon out Don noticed a certain confusion about one of the hatchways. A number of the crew seemed to be hauling about rather roughly a figure that was obscured by the crowd.

"What's the matter?" asked Don of a steward who came hurrying past him.

"They've nabbed a stowaway," was the reply.

"Poor fellow," thought Don. He knew that a stowaway was about as popular with a ship's officers and crew as a rattlesnake at a picnic

party. "I suppose they'll make him work out his passage in the stokehole for the rest of the voyage."

Just then a petty officer came up to where Don was seated in his deck chair between those occupied by the captain and the professor.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, addressing the captain, "but we have a stowaway there who insists on seeing the Sturdys and Professor Bruce. Just sheer impudence, I suppose, but I thought I'd tell you, sir."

Don and his uncles looked at each other in astonishment.

"What on earth can that mean?" cried the captain, jumping to his feet and striding toward the hatchway, closely followed by Don and the professor.

The crowd opened as they approached, and their astounded eyes fell on—Teddy Allison!

CHAPTER IV

A Pair of Scoundrels

"Brick!" cried Don, scarcely daring to believe his eyes.

"Teddy Allison!" ejaculated Captain Sturdy, in a tone that conveyed sternness as well as astonishment.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Professor Bruce, staring hard at the stowaway, as though wondering whether it was Teddy in the flesh or his ghost.

But it was a very substantial Teddy that stood before them, held in the grip of two of the sailors, his clothes rumpled and disheveled, smears of dirt across his face, his uncombed red hair flaming above his pale features.

His eyes had lighted with joy as they looked at Don, but fell sheepishly before the gravity that had replaced astonishment in the eyes of the captain and the professor.

Don leaped forward impulsively and threw his arm over Brick's shoulder.

"You sure had me going for a minute, Brick," he said. "You could have knocked

me down with a feather. But I can't tell you how glad I am to see you here."

The evident acquaintance of the Sturdys and Professor Bruce with the stowaway caused the sailors to relinquish their hold of Teddy's collar, and just at that moment one of the officers of the ship came along to look into the matter.

Captain Sturdy addressed him.

"You needn't worry about this boy, officer," he said. "His father is a friend of mine. I'll take all responsibility for him and pay his passage."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," replied the officer. "That will be all right. Hardly know where we'll find accommodation for him though. All our staterooms are taken."

"He can share the cabin of my nephew," replied the captain. "Come, Teddy," he went on, addressing the culprit. "Don will take you to his room and fit you out with some of his clothes after you've had a bath. Then I'll have something to say to you, young man."

There was something in Captain Sturdy's tone and glance that was not at all reassuring to the aforesaid young man, who hurried away with Don, glad to get away from the half-wondering, half-amused glances of the passengers who had been summoned by the hubbub.

"Gee, Don, I suppose I'm in for an awful scolding," Teddy whispered to his chum, as

he watched the uncompromising back of the captain.

"Shouldn't wonder, old boy," laughed Don. "You'll probably get an earful. But, after all, Uncle Frank won't eat you. And, at any rate, you're here, and nothing else matters much. You won't get any scolding from me, that's a cinch. You look mighty good to me, Brick. I'm crazy to hear what's happened to you since the ship sailed."

"It's a long story, mates," replied the grinning Teddy, whose mercurial spirits began to rise, despite the lecture in store for him. "But first let me get rid of some of this grime and slip into some decent clothes. Then I'll feel like a civilized human being again. Gee, there's no hobo has anything on me."

So Don forbore to question his friend further, and busied himself in getting out some of his clothes, while Teddy splashed about in the bathtub.

Teddy had scarcely finished dressing when there came a knock on the door. Don opened it, and the captain and the professor entered.

"Now, young man," said the captain, as they seated themselves, "perhaps you can explain your action in running away from home and stowing yourself away on this ship. It goes without saying that your father knew nothing about it."

The tone was cold and the look that went

with it seemed to bore Teddy through and through and demand the truth. Not that Teddy thought of telling anything else. Falsehood was not one of his vices.

His face flushed almost as red as his hair as he fidgeted about, nervously clasping and unclasping his fingers.

"I—I—meant to tell my father," he stammered. "I tried to find out where he was. I wrote and telegraphed and telephoned. But he was going from one place to another, and, somehow, I couldn't get in touch with him."

"Well?" said the captain, as Teddy paused.

"Then," confessed Teddy. "I got desperate to think of Don going to Egypt without me, and I made up my mind to go anyway and tell my father about it afterward."

"Afterward!" repeated the captain, with a sarcasm that was not lost on its object. "So you think it's all right to do things like this and ask your father's permission when it's too late for him to say no?"

"I don't suppose it was just right," admitted Teddy. "But I was sure he would let me go if he knew about it. When I wanted to go with Don to Brazil and he wouldn't let me, he half promised that I could go along if Don made another trip. And it isn't as though I hadn't tried to get his permission," he added, in the hope of softening Captain Sturdy's heart.

"That would have made it worse," conceded the captain. "All the same, that is no excuse for doing as you did. Undoubtedly your father will be greatly worried when he comes home and finds you gone."

"Oh, I took care of that!" exclaimed Teddy, snatching eagerly at any redeeming feature. "I left a letter for my father with one of the servants, telling him all about it. He'll know I am with you and that you will take good care of me."

The calm assurance of this almost took the captain's breath away, and a smile came to the professor's lips that he repressed instantly.

"And of course father will pay you for any expense I am to you," said Teddy, who had caught the professor's smile and took heart of hope from it.

The captain pondered for a moment.

"You did very wrong, Teddy," he said gravely. "No boy has a right to take such a step as that without his father's consent. If I could, I would send you back at once. But that is impossible. At the first stopping place, I will cable to your father and get his directions in the matter. In the meantime, of course, you are one of our party. I am very much displeased with you."

With this Parthian shot, the captain left the cabin, followed by the professor.

Teddy wiped the perspiration from his face and looked at Don.

"Gee, he did give it to me good and plenty," he said, as he sank down on the bed. "I feel as though I'd been drawn through a knothole. And at that, I know that everything he said was right."

"Everything that Uncle Frank says is right," declared Don loyally. "But tell me now, Brick, just how you managed to get on board and stow yourself away. Here I was, sore as a pup because you didn't come down to see me off, and you've been right on the ship with us all the time."

"I came down to the ship the night before she sailed," explained Teddy. "It was dark, and I slipped on board when no one was looking and hid away in one of the lifeboats. I didn't mean then—anyway, I didn't more than half mean—to be a stowaway. I told myself that I'd see you and your uncles when you came on in the morning and beg them to take me with them. I knew I wouldn't have to beg you," he added, with a grin.

"You bet you wouldn't," laughed Don. "I couldn't have said yes quick enough."

"But while I was hiding in the lifeboat I had plenty of time for thinking," went on Teddy; "and the more I thought, the surer I got that your uncles wouldn't do it without my father's knowledge."

"You were dead right there!"

"But I was crazy to go," resumed Teddy, "and I decided that the only way I could go was to stow myself away so that I couldn't be found until after the vessel sailed. The lifeboat didn't seem safe enough, for all that any one walking around would have to do would be to lift the tarpaulin covering and spy me.

"So I waited till after midnight and watched my chance and slipped down one of the open hatchways into the hold. There were hundreds of bales and barrels there, and it was easy to find a place where nobody would have a chance of finding me."

"Why didn't you come out sooner?" asked Don, in wonderment. "This is the third day that we've been sailing."

"Couldn't," was the reply. "I found it was easier to get in than it was to get out. I'd have come out after the first day if I could. But it was only this afternoon that a sailor came down in the hold for something, and I yelled to him. You ought to have heard the howl he let out. Guess he thought it was a ghost at first. Then he came for me. Oh, I got out on deck quick enough then—pulled up by the scruff of my neck."

"Were you hurt?" asked Don quickly.

"He didn't actually hit me," replied Teddy; "but he twisted his knuckles in my neck till I thought I'd choke. I guess sailors feel to-

ward stowaways something as brakemen feel about hoboes stealing rides on railroad trains. As soon as I could get my breath, I asked for the Sturdy party; and you know the rest."

"How did you get along for grub?" asked Don. "Did you have any with you?"

"Not a bit," was the answer. "You see, when I first came on board I counted on seeing you the next morning, really, so I didn't bring anything along with me. After I'd been down in the hold awhile I began to feel hungry. Then I got scared for fear I'd starve to death. But I rustled around among the boxes and barrels and found some boxes where the covers had been cracked or loosened and got hold of some canned goods, beef and preserved cherries. I broke the cans open on the sharp edge of a box. But, oh, boy, what I'm going to do to the grub when I once get at a regular table!"

"There goes the gong now," said Don, rising. "Come right along and fill up."

"Lead me to it!" cried Teddy, jumping up.

What he did to the fare of the liner's table amply fulfilled his prediction. Even the silent disapproval that still persisted on the faces of the captain and the professor had no effect on his appetite.

"Does it beat canned beef and cherries?" whispered the grinning Don, who was sitting beside him.

"By a thousand miles," replied Teddy, as

clearly as he could with his mouth full. "I've already let out my belt twice."

They had reached the dessert when Teddy gave a start. His eyes had fallen on the faces of two of his fellow passengers, seated at a table a few feet away.

"Who are those fellows?" he asked, in an agitated whisper.

Don followed the direction of his glance.

"They're Egyptians," he answered. "Their names are Tezra and Nepahak. Why do you ask?"

"They're rascals!" declared Teddy emphatically.

CHAPTER V

A Villainous Plot

Don looked at Teddy in surprise.

"How do you know those men are rascals?" he asked. "I don't like the looks of them myself, but I hadn't heard anything against them."

"I've heard plenty," rejoined Teddy. "And from their own lips, though they didn't know I heard them."

"Spill it," urged Don impatiently.

"Wait till I finish this pie," replied Teddy. "That's the most important thing I have to do just now."

He kept on imperturbably, while Don waited in a fever of curiosity.

"Come across now," said Don, when Teddy had finished the last crumb.

"That pie's mighty good," remarked Teddy, as he signaled the waiter to bring him another piece.

"I've seen anacondas eat," said Don disgustedly. "But you have it all over them."

"That's because they never tasted pie as

good as this," remarked Teddy complacently.

He finished his second helping, and then looked around for the waiter.

"No you don't!" exclaimed Don, jumping up and grabbing Teddy by the arm. "Come along now, or there'll be a famine on board this ship."

"I never thought you had such a mean disposition," remarked the grinning Teddy, resigning himself, nevertheless, and followed his friend out on the deck.

"Now, if you want to live another minute," said Don, when they had ensconced themselves comfortably in deck chairs, "tell me what you mean about those fellows."

"They came along the night I was hiding in the lifeboat," replied Teddy. "There was nobody else around that part of the deck, and they sat down within a few feet of me and began to talk. They kept their voices low and they talked in their own language, so that they felt pretty safe. But you know I picked up a good deal of Arabic while I was living in Algiers; so, though there was some difference, I could understand almost all they said.

"I didn't pay much attention at first. They were talking about some fellow named Fellus or something like that—"

"Phalos," interrupted Don. "That's another Egyptian that's on the ship. Kind of an

old man, a pretty good kind of a scout, it seems to me."

"I guess that's the one, then," said Teddy. "I hadn't listened long before I knew that they were trying to put something over on this Phalos, as you call him. Then I lifted up the edge of the tarpaulin a bit, and took a peep at them. The moon was up, so I had a good look, and I knew them again the minute I saw them at the table."

"What were they trying to put over on him?"

"Seems he's got some papers they want to get. I couldn't get just the rights of it, but it seemed mighty important to them. Heard one of them say it would make them rich if they could cop them. And I don't think they'd stop at anything to get them. I heard one of them say something that means about the same thing as our 'dead men tell no tales.' "

Just at this moment the two men they were talking about passed them. They were not sauntering, in the manner of most of the passengers, but moved as though they were bent on a purpose, like hounds on a trail.

"Look like a pair of pirates," snorted Teddy.

"They wouldn't take any prizes at a beauty show," agreed Don. "Wonder what they're up to now."

"Something they wouldn't want any one to know about, I bet," Teddy conjectured.

Suddenly a thought struck Don, and he started up.

"I didn't see Phalos at the table to-night!" he exclaimed. "He sits near us, and is usually there."

"Well, what of it?" asked Teddy carelessly. "Perhaps he's off his feed. And that's where he's different from me."

"I suppose it was something like that," agreed Don, sinking back again into his chair.

They chatted of other things, but Don's mind was haunted by a feeling of uneasiness. He could not shake off a conviction that something was wrong with the benevolent old Egyptian, whom he had learned to like. He told himself that he was foolish. Still an uncomfortable feeling persisted. At last he rose with decision.

"Come along, Brick," he said. "Let's stretch our legs a bit."

"Don't feel as though I could move," complained Teddy. "I was a trifle hearty at the table to-night."

"A trifle!" jeered Don. "That certainly is putting it mildly! All the more reason why you should walk it off. Up you come."

As he reinforced his urging by a vigorous tug at his friend's sleeve, Brick yielded with a groan.

"Where are you going?" he asked, extricating himself with difficulty from the depths of his chair.

"Oh, just going to take a turn or two about the deck," answered Don. "And if by chance we should happen to run across those two Egyptians, so much the better."

"What have you got on your chest?" asked Teddy, with quickened interest.

"Just a little hunch of mine that they may be up to some mischief," answered Don. "What you've told me about them and Phalos has made me feel uneasy, especially as the old fellow didn't turn up at meal time."

Teddy's previous experiences with Don in the Sahara had given him considerable respect for his friend's "hunches," and he went along with alacrity.

Twice they made the circuit of the deck without seeing the people of whom they were in search. Then, in the growing dusk, Don caught a glimpse of Tezra and Nepahak emerging hurriedly from a cabin a little way ahead.

He clutched Teddy's arm and drew him into a corridor leading from the deck, where they stood until the men had passed.

"Come along," he said, relinquishing his hold on his friend's arm and hastening out on deck.

"But I thought you were going to follow

them!" exclaimed Teddy, as he saw that Don was going in the opposite direction.

"Not now," replied Don. "That was Phalos' cabin they came from, and I'm going to take a look at that first."

In a moment the two boys were standing before the cabin in question, and Don knocked on the door.

There was no answer and no sound of any one stirring inside. Don waited a moment and then knocked again. Still no answer. Then he tried the knob. The door refused to give. It was locked.

Don looked hurriedly about and saw that the door of the room immediately adjoining was standing a little ajar. He pushed it open and found that it contained no bed but a miscellaneous collection of boxes, and was evidently a storeroom.

His eyes roved over the place and detected a transom at the side nearer the cabin of Phalos. Instantly he beckoned to Teddy and they went in, closing the door softly.

Making no noise, Don piled up some of the boxes and stood on them. This brought his head to a level with the transom.

For a moment he could make out nothing definite in the cabin. Then, as his eyes grew accustomed to the shadows, he saw the form of Phalos sitting in a chair. Looking closer, he saw that the old man was tightly bound and

that a gag had been thrust into his mouth.

Teddy also had mounted the boxes and stood at Don's side.

"Do you see that?" asked Don, in a whisper. "There isn't a minute to lose."

"What should we do?" exclaimed Teddy.

Don tried the transom and found that it swung toward him. He pulled it still further forward and fastened it to a hook above his head.

The aperture was none too large, but sufficient to permit the passage of his body.

"Come after me as soon as you can," directed Don, as he swung himself up and through the opening.

He dropped lightly on the other side and a moment later Teddy had followed him.

They rushed to the chair in which the old Egyptian was fastened. His eyes, which had been closed, opened with a look of terror, to be quickly replaced by one of hope as he recognized Don.

In a trice the boys had pulled out their jackknives and were sawing away at the cords that bound the captive. In a few minutes they succeeded in freeing him from bonds and gag.

The old Egyptian tried to speak, but his tongue at first refused to obey him.

"How can I thank you?" he said, at last, to the boys, who were rubbing his wrists and hands to restore the circulation. "How can I

reward you? You've saved my property, and perhaps you've saved my life."

"That's all right," replied Don. "We're glad we came in time."

"But how did you know what had happened to me?" asked Phalos.

"We saw those countrymen of yours coming from the cabin," explained Don. "We knew that they were enemies of yours, and as you hadn't turned up at meal time, we thought there was something wrong. What have those men got against you that they should treat you this way?"

"They are robbers," replied Phalos. "They knew that I had a great secret—" Here he checked himself and darted a quick glance at his deliverers. "That is, they know I have some valuable property which they want to take from me."

"Where are they now?" asked Don.

"They've gone to their own cabin to get implements to torture me with," was the startling reply. "I refused to tell them what they wanted, and they said they would find a way to cure my stubbornness. They may be back at any minute. We must get out of here at once."

"Right you are!" exclaimed Don. "We'll report the matter to the captain and have the rascals arrested. Come right along. You take

one arm, Brick, and I'll steady him on the other side."

They helped the old Egyptian to his feet. Just then they heard the grating of a key in the lock.

"It's Tezra and Nepahak!" exclaimed the Egyptian, in an agitated whisper. "They're coming back."

Don's eyes darted about the room and fell on the curtains shielding the bed.

"Sit there," he commanded, thrusting Phalos back in his chair. "Come, Brick."

In a flash the two boys were behind the curtains.

The stateroom door opened, and Tezra and Nepahak entered, the latter carrying several objects that by their faint clinking seemed to be steel tools or implements of some kind.

Palos had settled back in his chair, and in the gathering darkness seemed to be in the same condition as the rascals had left him.

Nepahak stepped over to the electric switch, but his accomplice halted him sharply.

"Don't turn on that light, you fool," he snarled. "This flashlight of mine will give us all the light we need."

He stepped over to the silent figure in the chair.

"Now, Phalos, we're going to make you listen to reason," he said in a tone of deadly determination. "We haven't followed you half-

way around the world to be balked at last. We know that you have the secret of the Tombs of Gold, and we're going to get it from you. If you tell it to us, we will release you and you won't be hurt. If you refuse, we have something here that will make you tell. And if we have to torture you, you will wish you had never been born. Now I'm going to take that gag from your mouth, so that you can tell me your decision."

He turned to his companion.

"Come here, Nepahak," he commanded. "Stand on that side of him while I remove the gag. Clap your hand over his mouth if he should try to shout an alarm. But first hand me the flashlight."

He took the light his confederate handed to him and flashed it on the face of his intended victim.

A wild exclamation escaped from him as he noticed the absence of the gag and saw also that the cords had been cut.

"Who has been here?" he cried, in alarm. "What does this mean? Come back here, you," he called to Nepahak, who was already making toward the door, intent upon escape.

"Now!" whispered Don, touching Teddy's arm.

CHAPTER VI

The Fight in the Dark

The next instant the boys rushed from their hiding place and launched themselves upon the rascals.

They were both tall and muscular, and had the advantage of the surprise. Don knocked the flashlight from Tezra's hand, and lashed out at him with both fists. The blows staggered the Egyptian, and his confusion was increased by tripping over the leg of Phalos, who was rising from his seat to take part in the fracas.

Tezra went down full length on the floor, with Don on top of him. Teddy had grappled with Nepahak and dragged him from the door.

The sound of voices and of hurrying feet outside indicated that the uproar had been heard. The imminence of capture made the rascals frantic, and with a desperate effort they freed themselves from their opponents, tore open the door, and vanished.

A moment later several of the crew with one of the officers came into the room. One of

the men turned on the electric light, and the party looked with exclamations of astonishment at the disordered room and the panting and disheveled boys.

"What's going on here?" asked the officer sharply.

Phalos stepped forward.

"Two men tried to rob me," he explained. "They had bound and gagged me. These boys learned of my plight and came to my help."

"Who were the men that tried to rob you and where are they?" asked the officer.

"They pulled away and ran out of the door just before you got here," was the reply. "Their names are Tezra and Nepahak. You will find their names on the passenger list of the boat."

The officer gave some hurried commands to his men and they went out. Then he turned to Phalos.

"Are you hurt?" he asked solicitously.

"Not seriously," answered the old Egyptian. "Somewhat bruised by the rough handling they gave me and shaken up by the experience. Nothing more than that."

"I am glad to hear that," was the reply. "This has been a most deplorable occurrence. I assure you that we will make every effort to arrest the rascals and hand them over to the authorities as soon as we reach port. In the meantime, I would deem it a favor if you and

these boys—who, by the way, showed mighty good pluck in tackling the thieves—would kindly keep this matter to yourselves. It doesn't do the ship or the line any good to have a thing of this kind noised about. Then, too, it's apt to make the other passengers nervous and spoil the pleasure of their journey. Would you mind promising me that?"

"Not the least in the world," answered Phalos promptly, and Don and Teddy nodded in agreement.

"With the exception of my uncles," qualified Don. "They're my guardians and have a right to know anything that happens to me while I'm traveling in their charge. But I can promise that they won't mention it to any one else."

"That's all right," replied the officer. "Now, Mr. Phalos, is there anything I can do for you? Perhaps you would like to have me send the ship's doctor in to look you over."

"Don't take that trouble, thanks," replied Phalos. "I was not injured. A good night's sleep will probably set me up again."

"Did the thieves get anything?" asked the officer, casting a look around as he prepared to leave.

"Nothing at all, thanks to the courage of those two brave boys."

"I'll have a guard set over this room, so that if those fellows should come back he can

nab them," promised the officer. "But I guess they'll steer clear of it. Probably we'll have them in custody before morning."

He bade Phalos and the boys good-night and went out, closing the door behind him.

"I guess we'd better be going too, Mr. Phalos," said Don. "That is, if there's nothing more we can do for you."

"I think you've done quite enough for me for one night," replied Phalos, with a grateful smile. "I can never thank you enough. You may have saved my life. At any rate you've preserved me from physical pain and permitted me to retain in my own keeping something that is very precious to me. I shall see you again in the morning and will express my thanks, I hope, a little more adequately."

"We're only too glad to have been of service," answered Don. "Good-night," and with a last word of thanks echoing in their ears, he and Teddy went out on the deck.

"Gee!" said Teddy, as he drew a long breath, "I feel like something that the cat dragged in, and I guess I look it too."

"Same here," laughed Don, as he took in the torn collars and rumpled clothes of himself and his friend. "It was some little fight those rascals put up. I only hope they're nabbed by this time. But say, Brick, how about that little hunch of mine?" and he gave his comrade a playful poke in the ribs.

"You win," agreed Teddy. "Your hunches are there with the goods, all right. But let's get to our cabin and wash up and slip into some other clothes."

As they were opening the door of their stateroom, they met captain Sturdy and Professor Bruce.

"Oh, there you are," said the captain. "We were wondering what had become of you. But what has happened?" he asked quickly, as he noticed the state of the boys' garments.

"Oh, we've had a little scrimmage," replied Don, and went on to narrate the exciting happenings of the last half hour.

His uncle listened with interest, not unmixed with some alarm, interrupting him at times with questions.

"You did well, both of you," Captain Sturdy said approvingly when Don had finished. Though it would perhaps, have been more prudent if you had summoned help as soon as you had discovered the state of things before you climbed through the transom. You ran a big chance of having one or both of those rascals stick a knife into you."

"I suppose so," answered Don. "But I didn't think of that. All I saw was that helpless old man in the power of those villains. If they'd only been a minute or two later in getting back, we'd have had the old man out

on the deck, and they wouldn't have dared to attack him there."

"It's curious that the thieves should have attempted so bold a thing right here on the ship," remarked the professor. "They must have been desperately anxious to get what he had. Had they searched his baggage?"

"No," replied Don. "And that's the funny thing about it. They hadn't broken into his bags or trunk, and it didn't seem that they intended to do so."

"But you say that they were there to rob him?" said the professor, in some perplexity.

"Yes," replied Don. "But the thing they wanted to get wasn't in his baggage. It was in his mind."

"You mean they wanted to extort a secret from him?" put in the captain.

"That was it," Don affirmed. "The old Egyptian told us that himself. They were going to torture him to get it out of him."

"It must have been very valuable if they were prepared to go to such lengths as that," remarked the professor. "Did he tell you what it was?"

"He didn't," replied Don. "But Tezra let it out when he told Mr. Phalos that he was going to make him tell the secret of the Tombs of Gold."

"The Tombs of Gold!" exclaimed Professor Bruce, with a start.

"Ever hear of them, Amos?" asked his brother-in-law, casting a keen glance at him.

"Many times," replied the professor. "But I never knew how much faith to put in their existence. There have been persistent rumors that there are such tombs in the Egyptian desert, and more than one expedition has been organized to search for them. But they've always had their troubles for their pains."

"Then you think they're myths?" asked the captain.

"I wouldn't say that," was the reply. "There are so many wonderful things in that mysterious country that I'd hesitate to say offhand that anything was impossible. And our own experience in connection with the city of Brass and Cave of Emeralds in the Sahara have taught us how much truth there may often be concealed in tradition."

"True enough," agreed the captain. "I'm beginning to think we may find this old Egyptian a very interesting person."

"He promised to look us up to-morrow morning," said Don. "If he does, I'll introduce him to you."

The boys were eager the next morning to learn whether the rascals had been apprehended. Don sought out the officer whom he had seen the night before, a Mr. Maitland.

"Anything doing, Mr. Maitland?" he inquired.

"Not a thing," was the disappointed reply. "We haven't found hide or hair of them. They seem to have vanished into thin air. But I'm having a quiet hunt going on for them, and sooner or later we'll get our hands on them. They must be somewhere on the ship."

"Unless they jumped overboard," suggested Don.

The officer laughed.

"Not a chance," he replied. "Rascals like that think too much of their precious skins. We'll catch them sometime skulking around the ship. For the present, they've probably slipped down a hatchway into a hold. There are plenty of hiding places there, and for a time they may elude us. But not for long."

Phalos had not appeared at the breakfast table, but had been served in his room. About the middle of the forenoon, however, he made his appearance, and, catching sight of Don and his party, came up to them with a smile.

"I was too agitated last night to thank you properly," he said, addressing himself to Don and Teddy. "But I want to do it now. In my confusion, I didn't even learn your names."

"This is my friend, Teddy Allison," said Don, indicating his comrade. "These are my uncles, Professor Bruce and Captain Sturdy. My own name is Don Sturdy."

"Sturdy!" exclaimed the Egyptian, as he acknowledged the introductions. "I had a very

dear friend of that name once, a Mr. Richard Sturdy. Is he, by any chance, related to you?"

"Related!" cried Don, as an electric shock seemed to pass through him. "He's my father! Oh, tell me, what do you know about him?"

Phalos looked at him, a little surprised at his vehemence.

"It's some years since I saw or heard of him," he replied. "But why do you ask? Surely you must know more about his whereabouts than I do."

Don's new-found hope died almost as soon as it was born, and his face was clouded with disappointment.

"Mr. Richard Sturdy is my brother," explained the captain. "He went away some time ago on an exploring expedition. The ship he sailed on was wrecked, and my brother received an injury to his head that we fear has affected his mind. We are now going to Egypt to look for him."

Then, while the old Egyptian listened with the keenest interest and sympathy, Don's uncle told briefly of the happenings that had brought the party on the present voyage.

"I am very sorry to hear this," Phalos observed, when the story was finished. "I sincerely hope your search will be crowned with success. It may be that I can help you, for I know my native country as no foreigner can. And, if I can, you may command my services.

I may be able to repay in some small measure the debt I owe to this brave nephew of yours and his friend."

"We appreciate your offer, and we shall certainly avail ourselves of it," said the professor warmly. "Perhaps you can help us even now by telling us something about your acquaintance with my brother-in-law."

"Mr. Sturdy and I were drawn together by many common interests while he was in my country," explained Zeta Phalos. "He was an enthusiast about the monuments and wonders of old Egypt, and that, of course, was pleasing to me. He was especially interested in the tombs of former Egyptian rulers, and spent weeks and months in studying those that had been opened and in looking for others that still remained untouched. I was able to help him in this, for all my life has been practically devoted to the same thing. So we grew to be very close friends."

"Was there any particular tomb or tombs that he was searching for?" asked Don eagerly.

The old Egyptian shot a quick look at his questioner.

"Perhaps he was," he answered evasively. "But he was rather a reticent man and kept his plans pretty closely to himself."

"We thought perhaps he was looking for the Tombs of Gold," remarked the professor casually, polishing his glasses.

Phalos gave a perceptible start.

"You've heard of the Tombs of Gold?" he asked, in a tone that he evidently tried to make careless.

"Oh, I know there's a tradition that such tombs exist somewhere in Egypt," replied Professor Bruce. "I don't know whether there's any truth in it or not."

"Egypt is rich in treasure," observed Phalos noncommittally. "In ancient days it stretched from the Euphrates to the headwaters of the Nile. Gold was brought in tribute to her kings from all parts of Africa and Asia. In the time of the Pharaohs her wealth was almost incalculable. Centuries have elapsed since then, but who shall say that some of that wealth does not remain either above or below her soil?"

"Then you believe that the Tombs of Gold really exist?" asked Don, his eyes shining.

"I did not say so," replied Phalos. "It is possible that Mr. Sturdy thought so. He was certainly intent upon some definite object he had in mind. He was not going about at random. Especially was he interested in the Valley of the Kings. There he spent most of his time, working sometimes till far into the night."

"It is reasonable to conclude, then, that he has now gone to the Valley of the Kings, do you think?" asked the captain.

"That is certainly where I would look for him first," replied Phalos. "You will have to pass through Cairo to get there. My home is in that city, and I hope you will make it your headquarters during your stay."

The friendship between Zeta Phalos and the members of the Sturdy party grew deeper as the voyage progressed. It soon became evident that the old Egyptian would prove invaluable to them when once they had landed and started on their search.

One night as the vessel was nearing the Mediterranean, Don found it impossible to sleep. His mind was full of thoughts of his parents, joyous when he thought of the coming reunion with his dear mother, sad when he dwelt on the plight of his equally dear father.

What had become of the latter? Was he wandering about aimlessly in the foreign land, exposed perhaps to hunger and thirst, to poverty and hardship? Perhaps at that moment he was dead! At the thought Don's heart was wrung with anguish. Or perhaps—and the thought was equally terrible—his mind, that splendid scientific mind, was gone forever.

Tortured by these possibilities, Don at last rose, slipped on some clothes, and went out on the deck.

It was about two o'clock in the morning, and there was no one in sight except occasional members of the crew intent on some duty and

shadowy figures of officers making their round of the ship.

The vessel was passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, and Don sat down in a chair near the stern, trying to divert his somber thoughts by gazing at the formidable frowning Rock that stood as the symbol of Great Britain's power in the Mediterranean.

A slight splash in the water attracted his attention. He turned his eyes in the direction of the sound, but could see nothing.

Then came a second splash, and with his eyes somewhat adjusted to the darkness, he could faintly detect a human head above the surface of the water. Almost instantly the head was lost in the gloom, but a faint trail of foam traced the course of a man swimming toward the shore.

At first Don jumped to the conclusion that a man had fallen overboard. But with the second splash he came to the conclusion that two were hardly likely to have fallen over so nearly at the same time. Besides, there was no call for help. And instead of swimming toward the ship, one, at least, was certainly making for the shore, which at that place was not more than a quarter of a mile distant, and probably the other man was following his example.

Just as Don was wondering what he ought to do, Mr. Maitland, who happened to be on

watch, came along. He peered at Don and recognized him.

"Keeping pretty late hours, aren't you?" he asked, with a smile. "What's the matter? Too hot to sleep?"

"Not that exactly," replied Don. "I was restless, and thought that a change might make me drowsy enough to make it worth while to go back to bed. I'm glad you came along, Mr. Maitland. Did you hear those splashes in the water?"

"Splashes!" exclaimed the officer, alert on the instant. "No. Where were they?"

"Rather close to the stern," replied Don. "One followed close upon another. I know that one was made by a man, for I saw him, and I suppose the other one was too."

The officer unslung his night glasses and looked in the direction of the shore, but could make out nothing.

"What do you suppose they were?" inquired Don. "Could they have been deserters, do you think?"

"That's possible, I suppose," replied Mr. Maitland, with a perplexed air, as he put up his glasses. "Though I don't know of any dissatisfaction among the crew. And, anyway, sailors usually wait until they reach some port before they take French leave. By Jove! I have it," he cried. "It's those scoundrels that tried to rob the Egyptian."

Don jumped to his feet.

"Do you think so?" he cried.

"That's it, for a thousand dollars!" declared the officer emphatically. "They've managed somehow to find a hiding place in a hold, though I don't see for the life of me how they did it. They probably knew that we'd pass close to the shore when we got to the Straits, and they decided to make a swim for it."

"Couldn't you get out a boat and capture them?" asked Don, chagrined at the thought of the rascals' escape.

Mr. Maitland shook his head.

"No use," he replied. "By the time we rounded to and lowered a boat they'd have reached the shore. Probably they're there now. Oh, they've put one over on us, all right. It's a rotten shame, too, for they richly deserved to be put behind the bars."

There was no use, however, of crying over spilt milk, and after a few minutes more of conversation Don went again to his room.

His story of the night's events to the members of his party and the old Egyptian the next morning created a stir. Phalos especially looked grave.

"Of course," said Don, to cheer him up, "we're not dead sure it was those fellows at all. Though Mr. Maitland told me this morning that the crew had been checked up and none was missing."

"I'm afraid it's only too true that Tezra and Nepahak have made their escape," mourned Phalos. "And if they have, I shall hear from them again."

"Perhaps they've had such a scare thrown into them that they'll let you alone for the future," ventured Teddy.

Phalos shook his head.

"I know them too well," he asserted. "Tezra is persistent and relentless. Nepahak is only his tool. They may bide their time, but soon or late they will renew their attempt to get possession of—"

"Of what?" asked the captain, as Phalos hesitated.

"Oh, well," returned Phalos, evading a reply. "I am not going to worry about what may happen. Let us talk of something pleasanter," and he launched into a description of the Temple of Philae that he had been discussing with the professor the night before.

They were now in the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean, almost every foot of whose coast and islands was rich in historic associations of the "glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome."

Under other circumstances, Don would have found an endless fascination in this storied sea and its surroundings, but now his mind was so taken up with thoughts of his parents that he could pay little attention to anything else. All

that he wanted was Egypt, the Egypt where he would find his mother, the Egypt where he hoped to find his father. This filled his whole horizon. Nothing else mattered. When, oh, when would Egypt loom up on the horizon?

And his heart gave such a leap that it almost seemed as though it would leave his body when one morning a faint blur in the distance, rapidly growing larger, revealed itself as the port of Alexandria, where he would first step on Egyptian soil.

CHAPTER VII

On the Trail

Only hours now separated Don from his mother, provided that she was still in Alexandria. But he had been thwarted so many times in the search for his dear ones, the cup of happy expectation had been so often dashed to the ground just as he was lifting it to his lips, that he scarcely dared to hope that this time his longing would be realized.

What might have happened since he had embarked at New York? Perhaps she was ill. Possibly she had been called away from the city by some clew as to the whereabouts of her husband. As to the possibility that he might find both of his parents reunited—Don scarcely dared hope for that.

He packed up all his belongings so that everything would be in readiness, and then paced the deck in a fever of impatience.

The steamer seemed to be only creeping along. Yet it was plowing through the water at a rapid speed that only slowed down when they neared the older of the two harbors of the famous Mediterranean city.

Captain Sturdy and Professor Bruce were almost as agitated as Don himself, though they managed to maintain more of a curb on their emotions. Teddy, too, was wrought up because of his keen sympathy with his friend.

Phalos bade them all a cordial good-bye just before they landed.

"Though it is really *au revoir* instead of good-bye," he said, with a genial smile, "for I am going to hold you strictly to your promise to come to see me in Cairo as soon as you reach there, and, if possible, make my house your headquarters. I shall never forget," he added, turning to Don and Teddy, "what you did for me in saving my—property and quite probably my life. You may count upon me for all I can do in helping you to find Mr. Sturdy."

They thanked him, and promised that they would surely see him in Cairo.

They landed amid clamor and hubbub, the cries of porters and pleadings of beggars that are inseparable from all the seaports of the East. To these they paid no attention, but hailed a taxicab and drove through the large handsome streets of the European quarter to the hotel from which Mrs. Sturdy had dispatched her cablegram.

"Is a Mrs. Richard Sturdy among your guests?" asked the captain, as the party went up to the desk.

Don's heart was in his throat as he listened for the answer.

"Yes," was the reply. "Do you wish to see her?" and he reached for the desk telephone.

"No need of announcing us," broke in Don. "These gentlemen are her brothers and I am her son. We will go right up, if you please."

The clerk summoned a bellboy, who rose languidly and came toward them.

"Hurry, hurry!" urged Don, slipping a coin into his hand. "See how quickly you can lead us there."

There was a noticeable quickening of step on the part of the attendant as he moved toward the elevator.

"I guess I'll stay down here till you send for me," said Teddy hesitatingly.

"No, you won't!" exclaimed Don, reaching out and pulling him in with him.

They ascended to the second floor, and hurried down the hall to a door at which their guide pointed.

Don was in the van, and with a trembling hand knocked on the door. It opened almost instantly, and a sweet-faced, slender woman, still young, though there were lines of care on her forehead, stood before them.

"Mother! Mother!" cried Don, and threw himself in her arms.

"Don! My precious boy! Oh, my dear

boy!" cried Mrs. Sturdy, sobbing with happiness as she folded Don close to her heart.

She hugged and kissed him and patted his hair, standing him off at times to look into his face and then drawing him again to her as though she would never let him go.

Don's arms were about her. Tears of joy ran down his cheeks as he tried incoherently to tell how much he loved her and had missed her and how delighted he was that at last he had found her.

Now it was the turn of the captain and the professor, who had stood aside for a moment while mother and son were tasting the first bliss of reunion. Their eyes too were moist, as they embraced the sister and sister-in-law who was unspeakably dear to them and for whom they had searched over so large a part of the world.

It was a long time before the members of the happy excited group had gained some measure of control over themselves. Then Don seated his mother in a chair, on the arm of which he sat, holding her hand as though he felt he must keep close grip on her, lest she should vanish and he awake to find it all a dream.

The others drew up their chairs, and it was then for the first time that Don noticed that Teddy was not with them.

"Where's Teddy?" he asked, as he looked around the room.

"Outside in the hall, I imagine," replied the professor. "He probably feels shy about coming into what is so strictly a family party."

"Who's Teddy?" asked Mrs. Sturdy, with a smile.

"A friend of mine who came along with us," explained Don. "We met him when we were in the Sahara, and it was his father who first gave us news of the sinking of the *Mercury*. He hasn't any mother. He's a splendid fellow, Mother. You'll love him."

"Of course, I shall, if he's a friend of yours," said Mrs. Sturdy. "And I'll be a mother to him, as far as I can, if he will let me."

"May I bring him in?" asked Don eagerly.

"Surely."

Don dashed out of the door, found Teddy leaning against the wall of the corridor, grabbed him and dragged him in.

"Here he is, Mother," he sang out, releasing his captive. "This is Teddy Allison, the best pal a fellow ever had."

Whatever shyness Teddy might have felt was banished at once by the warmth with which Mrs. Sturdy drew him to her and gave him a hug, putting him at ease at once.

There was a host of questions from Mrs. Sturdy regarding Ruth, who, the captain in his

cablegram had assured her, was safe with them at home. When these queries had been satisfactorily answered, she in turn told them of the adventures of herself and her husband after they had been rescued from the *Mercury*.

Tears came into her eyes as, in response to their first eager queries, she told them that nothing had developed as to her husband's whereabouts since she had sent her cablegram.

"I've searched everywhere," she said. "I've written and telegraphed to all parts of Egypt. At first I was crippled for lack of funds, but after I received the money you sent I employed private detective agencies as well. But all of it has resulted in nothing. It is as though he has vanished off the face of the earth."

At this point she broke down.

"Oh, if you knew how I have suffered!" she said. "If you only knew!"

Don hugged her and tried to comfort her, and the professor patted her hand consolingly.

"Never mind, Alice," he said. "We're with you now, and we'll search the whole length and breadth of Egypt."

"We'll find him," asserted the captain, the very bigness of him adding power to the conviction in his tone. "You've had an awful burden to bear, you poor girl, but now, as far as you can, you must shift it to our shoulders."

She looked at them gratefully through her tears.

"It would not be so bad," she resumed, "if he went by his right name or if he even knew his name. Then it might be easy to trace him. But all we have to go by is a description of him, and that might so easily apply to many others that you can't place much reliance on it.

"It's all been like a hideous nightmare since the *Mercury* went down," she resumed. "Richard's head was hurt by a block that struck him in the confusion of getting off into the boat. The wound healed, however, and for the first few days he seemed to be all right. It was only after we had been landed at Bahia in Brazil and had started on our trip overland to Martin Clifton's house, from which we expected to sail for the United States in the private yacht he offered to place at our disposal, that I began to notice something queer about him. His mind seemed to be dwelling more and more on Egypt. You know he spent a good deal of time exploring there before the war."

"Yes, I know," said the professor, and the captain nodded in assent.

"He kept talking about the Valley of the Kings in Egypt," went on Mrs. Sturdy. "At first I'd try to change the subject and get him to talk of other things. But he always came back to the one thing that engrossed his mind. Then

he would talk half to himself about figures and measurements. He had a tape measure and would go about the rooms in Mr. Clifton's house and get their length and breadth and height. Then he would put them down on a piece of paper and after studying them would mutter. 'That isn't it. Must try further.' "

"Just the very thing you found scribbled on those bits of paper among his memoranda, Uncle Amos!" ejaculated Don. "He was looking for some special thing, something of which he already had the measurements."

"I'm sure it was a tomb of some kind he had in mind," said Don's mother. "Again and again he would break out with something about the Tombs of Gold—"

"The Tombs of Gold!" exclaimed Don, with a start. "Why, that is what those fellows were trying to get information about from that old Egyptian!"

"The old Egyptian?" repeated Mrs. Sturdy inquiringly.

"A man we met on the boat coming here," explained Don. "A man named Phalos. I'll tell you all about him later. But go on, mother."

"All I could think of was of getting back home as soon as possible, so that Richard could get the medical care that he needed," his mother continued. "But we were delayed in starting, and all the time he kept getting worse.

Oh, it was terrible to see such a splendid intellect losing itself in delusion," she sobbed. "Again and again I felt that I would go crazy myself."

"Poor, dear mother!" said Don, putting his arms around her neck.

"One night," resumed Mrs. Sturdy, when she could speak coherently, "there was a terrific storm. The thunder and lightning seemed to affect him strongly and bring things to a climax. He and Ruth and I were seated in our room when he suddenly started up, shouting, 'I must go to Egypt,' and rushed out into the darkness. I rushed out after him calling to him to stop and come back. The thunder may have drowned my voice, but at any rate he didn't heed me and kept on."

Tears came into Don's eyes as he pictured his gently nurtured mother running in a frenzy of anxiety and grief after his distraught father in the rain and darkness.

"No one was abroad in that terrible storm," went on Mrs. Sturdy. "There was nobody I could get to help me. Richard kept on till he got to the river side. There was a vessel moored to the wharf and he jumped on board. I saw him stumble and disappear. I leaped after him and stumbled into an open hatchway. That was all I knew for a long time afterward."

Don hugged her convulsively, too overcome

to trust himself to speak, while the professor and the captain were not ashamed of the tears that came into their eyes.

"When I came to myself," resumed Don's mother, "I was in total darkness. My head was dizzy, and it was some time before I realized what had happened. Then it all came back to me. I could tell from the pitching and the swaying that the vessel was in motion. I felt about me and found your father near by. He was unconscious. After a while he came to himself in part, though he was still dazed.

"Then I found a pole and hammered at the hatch until they heard me and the cover was taken off. They brought us up on deck. I found that we were on a vessel bound for the Mediterranean. There was no wireless on board, so that I could not communicate with any one on shore. But the captain and everybody on board were very kind to us when I had told my story. There was enough money in Richard's pockets to pay for our passage and leave a modest amount when we should reach shore. It was a long voyage and a most trying one. The worst of it was that Richard no longer recognized me. He declared that he had never seen me before. He had the delusion that he was King Ingot of the Bars of Gold."

"Poor father! Poor mother!" murmured Don, his heart wrung by the narration.

"But why didn't you cable us the instant you got to shore?" asked the captain.

"I should have done so, of course," was the reply. "But I kept hoping that Richard would recover, and for his sake I wanted to keep the matter secret from everybody who knew him, even from you. I knew it would be a mortifying memory for him all through his life to have it known that he had been insane. Any man would feel that way, and Richard is very sensitive. If he had recovered, I would never have divulged the secret, and I would have put Ruth, too, under a pledge of silence."

"I understand, and it does you credit," said the captain.

"Finally," went on Mrs. Sturdy, "we reached this city, and I got Richard on shore and under the care of a physician. But nothing could be done, the doctor said, except to keep him as quiet and composed as possible and depend upon the healing hand of Time to set his poor mind aright. Physically, he was in good condition, for the sea voyage had been beneficial.

"But instead of getting better mentally, he steadily grew more irrational. The very fact that he was now in Egypt, the atmosphere, the language, the heat, the sights, the sounds, emphasized his delusion. Night and day he kept dwelling on the Valley of the Kings. He would declare that he was the king of the Valley of

the Kings, and that he must go and look after his kingdom. And one day he eluded me and disappeared. No one had seen him go. No one knew where he had gone. It was then that I cabled to you. And now you are here, and, oh, how thankful I am!"

Once more she broke into a storm of weeping, for the strain of the narration and the picture it had brought up before her were too much for her overtaxed strength.

The others soothed and comforted her to the extent of their power.

"You've been just wonderful," declared Don, as he hugged her to him.

"A perfect heroine," asserted her brother. "Not one woman in a thousand could have stood up under such a strain."

"I'm mighty proud of you, Alice," said the captain, his voice husky with emotion. "But now all the work and responsibility are going to be taken off your overburdened shoulders. It's up to us now. You must just rest and relax, or you, too, will break down completely. And, please God, we'll bring Richard back to you, and with care and the greatest skill that we can command, it won't be long before he's his old splendid self again. Then this terrible thing will be nothing more to you than a dreadful dream."

Under their thoughtful ministrations and the delight and reassurance that their presence

gave her, Mrs. Sturdy gradually recovered her composure. They refused to let her talk any longer just then about her husband's disappearance, and chatted with her about Hillville and Ruth and the other members of the household, Don bringing a smile from her at Jennie's remark about her mistress being all alone in "the land of the Pigamids and the Spinach."

After a while the captain and the professor, taking Teddy along with them, went out to attend to the pressing matters in hand. Don stayed with his mother to tell her of his adventures in the Sahara and Brazil and the thousand other things that she was eager to know about.

The experience that Don's uncles had acquired in their travels about the world stood them in good stead in the present situation. Professor Bruce knew the language almost as well as he did his own, and both were tactful and at the same time masterful in dealing with the native races of the East.

Before night fell they had learned by inquiries in the native quarters that a man corresponding to Richard Sturdy's description had secured a small party to go with him on an exploring expedition. There had been no explicit mention of the Valley of the Kings, but the party had started south in that direction.

Had they noticed anything peculiar about the man? the professor asked.

"Well, Allah seems to have set a mark on him," his informant replied. "His eyes were bright and he said that he was a king. But, after all, many kings visit Egypt. And then, all foreigners are queer. He promised to pay his men well and to double or treble their pay if he was successful in finding what he was going for. So there were plenty that were willing to go."

This was much, but it was not enough, and the two American men, still accompanied by Teddy, prosecuted their researches untiringly until they found the wife of one of the party who had accompanied the bright-eyed man, and she had heard her husband say that he was going to the Valley of the Kings.

"So far, so good!" exclaimed Captain Sturdy, as, tired but exultant, they made their way to the European quarter.

"We at least have a goal to aim for," declared the professor.

CHAPTER VIII

A Land of Wonders

"And now, Teddy," said the captain, "we'll send a cablegram to that father of yours and tell him all about his prodigal son and ask him whether you can go with us or whether we'll have to bundle you back home."

"Oh, please ask him to let me stay with you, now that I'm here," begged Teddy.

He noted with pleasure that the captain no longer addressed him as "young man." As a matter of fact, the captain, who was extremely fond of the boy, had long ago forgiven him, and the way Teddy had borne himself in the encounter with the rascals aboard the steamer had fully reinstated him in the good graces of his temporary guardian.

The cablegram was dispatched, and then, after some inquiries at a shipping office, the party made their way back to the hotel.

Don and his mother were delighted at the news they had secured.

"I might have known that things would be all right as soon as you got here," said Mrs. Sturdy gratefully.

"Oh, we old hounds are still some good when it comes to picking up a trail," replied her husband's brother, with a grin.

"And now we must get busy and start at once," said the professor. "Every hour is precious."

"I can start at almost a minute's notice," declared Mrs. Sturdy.

The captain hesitated.

"I know just how you feel, Alice," he said slowly. "But, really, I think it would be better for you not to go with us. The desert is no place for a woman, and it's going to be a very hard and trying expedition."

"Oh, but I want to go!" exclaimed Mrs. Sturdy, disappointment coming into her face.

"Of course, you naturally would," rejoined her brother-in-law. "But all the same I don't think it would be wise. You agree with me, don't you, Amos?" he asked, turning to Mrs. Sturdy's brother.

"I certainly do," rejoined the latter. "You see, Alice, with all you've gone through, you've nearly reached the breaking point. Even if you were perfectly well and strong, it would be inadvisable; and as things stand, it would be almost suicidal. We've made inquiries at the shipping office, and a liner is sailing tomorrow. You need to recuperate in the rest and quiet of home. And then, too, Ruth needs you."

The last proved the strongest argument in

breaking down Mrs. Sturdy's reluctance, and she finally consented.

The few hours she still had left with Don were golden ones for both mother and son, and they spent every moment they could together before the vessel sailed.

Her family saw her provided with every possible comfort on the vessel that was to bear her to the waiting arms of Ruth, and after loving leave-takings, stood on the shore and waved to her until her dear form at the steamer's rail could no longer be distinguished.

Don's eyes were wet as he turned to go back to the hotel after the parting from his mother, but there was a measure of peace and happiness in his heart to which it had been a stranger for years. At least, he had found his mother and held her in his embrace.

God had been good and restored to him his mother and sister. Surely he could depend on Him to help him find his father. The boy took new courage and mentally girded up his loins for the coming struggle.

Those left behind stopped at the telegraph office on their way back to the hotel and found a cablegram awaiting them from Mr. Allison. Captain Sturdy tore it open while Don and Teddy waited with bated breath.

The captain read the message aloud:

"Young rascal ought to be spanked. Give

him my love. Would have let him go if I had known. He can make the trip with you. Thanks for your kindness. Know he is in good hands. Will make matters right with you when you get back.

"ALLISON."

Don clasped Teddy in his arms after the reading of the telegram, and the two boys executed a wild dance on the floor of the office, much to the scandal of the native clerks, who looked on open-eyed.

"Glory hallelujah!" cried Don. "You're going with us, Brick! Old scout, you're going with us! Do you hear?"

"It's the reward of virtue," said Brick, with a shameless grin.

"Virtue!" snorted the captain, trying to look stern, but not succeeding very well. "It simply shows that a young scapegrace can sometimes get by. Come along now. There's much to do, and we have to hustle."

They "hustled" to such good purpose that they were able to take the train for Cairo that afternoon. They were agreeably surprised, or at least the boys were, to find that they were in a smart clean train that would compare favorably with anything in Europe, and that the express would cover the hundred and fifty mile trip to Cairo in less than four hours. The lads had expected the ramshackle affair, com-

mon in the East, that would simply drag along under all condition of discomfort.

"It's due to the English occupation," explained the professor. "They see that everything is good and up-to-date and in accord with Western standards."

Through the windows of the train, as it sped along, the boys saw a fascinating panorama unfolded. They were in a land that was literally flowing with milk and honey. As far as the eye could see, the soil was unbelievably rich. There were great groves of palm trees, their feathery fronds waving gracefully in the air; fields of dark loam that needed only to be tickled with the hoe to make them laugh; extensive fields of cotton, looking like heaps of drifted snow; and plantations of sugar cane, the stalks crowded so thickly together as to form what seemed almost an impenetrable forest.

The coloring of the landscape was also a dream of beauty. The bright green of the fields, the reddish brown of the Nile, along whose banks they often wound, the mellow tints of yellow rocks under a sky of cerulean blue, formed a picture to delight the eye of an artist.

"A wonderful country," remarked the professor. "Rich beyond imagination, even after centuries of Turkish misrule. We can imagine what it must have been in the days of the Pharaohs, when every inch of ground was care-

fully cultivated and when this valley of the Nile supported an immense population."

"What makes it so rich?" asked Teddy.

"The River Nile," was the answer. "The annual overflow of the river leaves a rich deposit of mud that has gradually grown deeper with the passage of centuries. Dry up the Nile, and Egypt would no longer exist. It would be just like the Sahara. The old Egyptians used to worship the Nile as a god and pay sacrifices to it, because they knew their very lives depended upon it. The priests had pillars, on which they marked each year the rising of the waters. If the waters were high there would be an abundant harvest. If they were low the crops would be very poor. If unusually low, the country would be threatened with famine. In a very real sense the Nile is Egypt. Even now, beyond the limits of the spread of the water the country is practically a desert."

The old and the new were in perpetual contact all through the train journey. The railroad stations were neat and well-kept, with well-uniformed attendants and English clerks in spotless white. Around them clustered scores of beggars extending their skinny hands toward the car windows and clamoring for baksheesh. The train passed handsome villas surrounded by beautiful gardens. These were within a stone's throw of squalid mud huts, with ragged dirty children playing about the

doors. Donkeys, so heavily laden with sugar cane that the very heads of the patient animals were hidden, were prodded along with sticks in the hands of their drivers. These ancient burden-bearers disputed the road with modern motor cars, whose honking horns seemed strangely out of place in that Oriental setting.

It was a fascinating study of contrasts, and it so engrossed the attention of the boys that it was with a sensation of regret they found that they were approaching Cairo, the capital of the kingdom and the greatest city of Africa.

They had telegraphed to Zeta Phalos that they were coming, and they found him waiting for them with a handsome touring car and a uniformed chauffeur. He waved aside all their suggestions that they might be taxing his hospitality too much, and insisted on conveying them to his home, to be his guests until they set out on their search.

There was no denying such friendliness, and they stepped into the car and were rapidly whirled to the home of Phalos, which proved to be a palatial one in the suburbs of the city, not far from the banks of the Nile.

It was a beautiful structure, built in harmony with the climate and surroundings. There were many rooms opening on balconies that overlooked a courtyard in which were plashing fountains, and everything indicated

that their host was a man of wealth, as well as of breeding and culture.

After a dinner so good that Don and Teddy ate till for very shame's sake they had to stop, the party adjourned to a balcony which fronted on the river.

"Gee! pinch me somebody," exclaimed Teddy, as he sank into a chair and took in the full glory of the sunset. "I feel as if I were living in the days of the Arabian Nights."

Don promptly obliged him with a vigorous pinch.

"Ouch!" cried Teddy, rubbing the stinging flesh. "You needn't be so mighty literal."

"A friend will always do what another friend asks him to," replied Don virtuously.

From the Nile came the sound of native music, as a felucca glided down the stream with a wide ripple spreading from her bows, the oars of her crew swaying to the faint sounds of a chantey, such perhaps as may have been sung in the days of the Pharaohs. The white sails of a dahabiyeh gleamed with a rosy tint in the last rays of the sinking sun. It was a scene of measureless peace and enchantment, as far apart from the hubbub and bustle of the modern world as though it were on another planet.

The Americans roused themselves at last from the trance into which they had fallen. Phalos was speaking.

"I cannot tell you how glad I am to have you with me," he was assuring Don's uncles. "The more glad because it is in some sort a compensation for some bad news that I received from Alexandria just a few minutes before you came."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Professor Bruce, straightening up in his chair. "May I ask what it is? That is, if it's nothing personal and private."

"In a sense I suppose it concerns all of us," Phalos answered slowly, toying with his glasses. "Tezra and Nepahak have landed in Alexandria!"

CHAPTER IX

Startling News

"Tezra and Nepahak!" exclaimed Don, the faces of the sinister pair coming up before his memory.

"Those precious rascals!" ejaculated Captain Sturdy, a frown passing over his brow.

"How do you know that they have landed?" asked the professor, settling back uneasily into his seat.

"From a sure source," replied Phalos. "A friend of mine in Alexandria, whom I took into my confidence regarding my experience on shipboard and who agreed to have a watch kept on debarking passengers, brought me word. He knows the men, and assures me there is no mistake."

"I had thought that by this time they were below with Davy Jones," grumbled Teddy.

"No such luck," remarked Phalos, with a smile that did not conceal the deep anxiety he felt. "They must have made land all right the night they slipped overboard."

"But how could they have got here so soon?" asked Don, in some perplexity.

"Had the luck to get an English liner that stopped at Gibraltar the day after they had swum to shore," was the reply. "My friend tells me that it is one of the fastest boats on the line."

"They say that the Evil One looks after his own," growled the captain.

"And this is one of the things that seems to prove it," added Don.

"Well," said the professor, crossing his legs, "now that they are here, what do you apprehend?"

"That they'll be up to mischief right away," replied Phalos. "The experience they've been through won't change the intentions of such calloused scoundrels. They'll simply attribute that to bad luck and try again."

"It's too bad that they have such a grudge against you," remarked Don.

"It isn't a grudge," explained the old Egyptian. "I've never done them any harm, and their feeling toward me isn't prompted by revenge. They simply know that I have a valuable secret, and they are trying to extort it from me."

There was a dead silence in the group that was in itself a question that all were too polite to ask.

Phalos pondered long before he spoke.

"I have never revealed the secret to a living soul," he said at last. "But there is something

about you that invites my confidence and assures me that it will not be betrayed. Besides I owe you something on the score of gratitude."

They waved that aside with a gesture of their hands.

"It concerns the tombs of a certain royal family of an old dynasty of the Pharaohs," Zeta Phalos began, while all listened intently. "I have reason to believe that they exist in the vicinity of the Valley of the Kings and have never been discovered or uncovered."

"The Valley of the Kings!" exclaimed Don. "Why, that's where we're going in search of my father."

"Exactly," replied Phalos. "And where I'm going, too, if you are good enough to let me form one of your party."

"With the greatest of pleasure," assented Professor Bruce, while the captain nodded his head in vigorous agreement. "Your knowledge of the place will be invaluable to us, to say nothing of the pleasure we will have from your company."

Phalos inclined his head in courteous acknowledgment.

"But I thought," said the captain, "that practically all of the tombs of the great rulers of Egypt had been discovered and explored."

The Egyptian shook his head.

"Not all," he said. "A great many have

been opened by scientists and their treasures lie now in the great museums and libraries of the old world. Others have been broken into by thieves and the tombs despoiled of gold and gems which were sold secretly to whoever would buy. But great treasures still await the excavators, as is proved by the recent discovery of the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen."

"Ah, yes," broke in the professor, "that is the greatest of them all. I am counting on examining that when we get to Luxor."

"The greatest of them all so far," qualified Phalos. "But if I am not mistaken, a still greater remains to be discovered. Great heaps of gold and jewels that have dazzled the eyes and the imaginations of the world have been found in Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb. But they will be surpassed, I think, if we ever discover the Tombs of Gold."

"The Tombs of Gold!" ejaculated the professor, while Don and Teddy looked at each other significantly. "Isn't that rather an extravagant description? Do you really mean of gold?"

"Just that," replied Phalos soberly. "Not the tombs themselves, perhaps, but the coffins and pillars and implements placed there for the use of the dead."

"Just what monarch was buried there?" asked the professor, with just the faintest tinge of skepticism in his tone.

"You have heard, of course, of Ras-Ameses," replied Phalos.

"Surely," replied the professor, with quickened interest. "The richest and most powerful ruler of one of the oldest dynasties who extended his reign over all of Libya and Ethiopia. The one who is supposed first to have worked the mines of Ophir."

"Yes," assented Phalos, "the one whose palace was filled with gold and silver ornaments, whose bed was of solid gold and whose barbaric splendor has never had a parallel among the rulers of the East."

"Gee," murmured Don, while Teddy's lips puckered for a whistle which he did not emit.

"And you will remember, too, that his tomb has never been discovered," continued Zeta Phalos.

"That is so," agreed the professor. "It has been the dream of archæologists to find it, but all of them have been forced to give it up in despair."

"That," pronounced Phalos, with a tincture of pride in the solemnity of his tone, "is the tomb that I expect to find."

The Americans looked at him, startled, and, despite themselves, were a little incredulous.

"It will be one of the greatest triumphs of modern discovery if you do," replied the professor, after a moment.

"What makes you think you have a clue to

its whereabouts?" asked Don, in deep interest.

"It is a curious story," replied Phalos, smiling at the boy. "One of the romances of archæology.

"Many years ago, when I was still strong and vigorous, I was riding in a remote part of the Valley of the Kings. Above me towered a great overhanging cliff that cast a grateful shadow over the road and prompted me to get off my horse and rest there while I had my midday meal.

"The place was off from the beaten road of travel, and there was nothing to distract my attention. I lay there after my meal for a while, stretched out on my back, looking up idly at the great face of the cliff. At a height of perhaps three hundred feet, I could make out what seemed to be carvings or symbols of some sort.

"While I was looking, a piece of stone fell off the surface and dropped almost at my feet. I picked it up and saw curious hieroglyphics on it. I was an ardent student of the ancient writings, and had no trouble in making out the name of Ras-Ameses."

Professor Bruce gave vent to an exclamation.

"That made the blood thrill in my veins," resumed Phalos. "I knew, of course, the mystery that had always veiled the last resting place of that monarch, and it seemed as

though chance had placed the key to the puzzle in my hands.

"Right then and there, I resolved to follow the matter up. I made my way up the almost perpendicular side of the cliff, with only my hands and feet to aid me, until I reached a narrow ledge, where the old stone masons must have stood when they first made the inscription. It was risky work, for a slip would have meant certain death.

"I could copy part of the inscription from there, but a time soon came when I had to have a ladder to climb further. I had to drag the ladder up with a rope and place it in position almost upright on the ledge perpendicularly against the face of the rock. The least little movement on my part would have overbalanced and plunged me outward and down to the foot of the cliff."

"Risky work!" exclaimed the captain, looking at the old Egyptian with the look in his eyes that one brave man has for another.

"I was young, and perhaps foolhardy, then," replied Phalos. "I remember one day when I escaped death almost by a miracle. I was on the ladder which I had thrown, equipped with hooks, over a rocky ledge above me. Suddenly the lower part of the ladder broke and I was left clutching the upper part and swinging over the precipice. I had to pull myself up hand

over hand on the upper rungs until I reached to the top and safety."

"A mighty close call!" ejaculated Don, who was following the narration with breathless interest.

"Somewhat," agreed Phalos, with a smile. "But I finally copied the inscription and brought it home to study it. It proved to be one of the boastful inscriptions of his power and glory that Ras-Ameses had probably composed before his death, leaving orders that it should be inscribed where it would probably endure for ages. The fact that it was in a place where it might never be read made no difference. What he was concerned with was its eternity. The gods at least would have a record of his exploits.

"He enumerates his vast wealth and gives a description of the treasures he had ordered to be placed in his tomb, where other members of the royal family also were buried or to be buried. There were golden chariots, which he expected to drive in the future world. There were golden beds, on which he expected to recline. There were gem-studded vases of alabaster containing precious perfumes and ointments. There was a golden boat that would be used in ferrying him over the dark waters of the underworld. And all of these are described with a definiteness and particularity that carry conviction."

He paused and looked about him.

"But where are the tombs containing all these treasures?" asked Don breathlessly, before the others, equally excited, could speak.

"As to that I have only indications," was the reply. "The references to them are vague and mysterious in the inscription. But there is enough to make me feel sure that with patience and the proper assistants I can eventually find them."

The professor cleared his throat.

"Are you sure that you are the only man alive who possesses these clews?" he asked.

Zeta Phalos was silent for a moment.

"As far as I know, I am," he replied. "And yet," he went on, with some slight hesitation, "I have sometimes suspected that one other man might have the key to the secret."

"Who is that?" asked the captain quickly.

"Richard Sturdy," was the answer.

CHAPTER X

In Great Danger

THERE was a gasp from the members of the party at Zeta Phalos' words, and Don bounded to his feet.

"My father!" he cried.

"What makes you think my brother knew anything about this?" asked the captain, with as much agitation as he ever permitted himself to show.

"Mr. Sturdy and I were firm friends when he was here on his first exploring expedition," replied Phalos. "I admired him because of his fine intellect; and then, too, his passion for research along the same lines as my own drew us together. Many a time he has been a guest in my home, and, seated right on this balcony, we have discussed the things we had in common. More than once we had spoken of Ras-Ameses and the mystery concerning his burial place. I had at that time made my discovery of the inscription, but was keeping it a safely guarded secret.

"It happened that we were once both at the

Valley of the Kings at the same time, though with different parties. One day, while riding along at the foot of the cliff on which I had discovered the inscription, a piece of paper fluttered down from the rock. I wondered where it could have come from. I picked it up and found that it bore creases in it that resembled hieroglyphics. I knew that they formed part of the inscription. You can imagine something of my surprise and consternation at the thought that perhaps some one else was the sharer of my secret.

"I had a pair of powerful glasses with me and unslung them and focused them upon the rock. I could distinctly see other bits of paper on various portions of the inscription. Then I understood, and, although I was chagrined, I was filled with admiration for some one's ingenuity.

"The man, whoever it was, had approached the matter from the top of the cliff. He had wet broad sheets of paper and lowered them from the top with a flat board behind them so as to press them against the inscription. The letters made creases in the wet paper. As soon as the paper was dry, he had drawn it up and probably filled in the creases with ink or pencil. Thus he would eventually have a complete copy of the inscription, and could decipher it at his leisure."

"An extremely ingenious method," com-

mented the professor, "and one that makes me proud of my brother-in-law, if he were the author."

"What makes you think that my father was the one who did it?" asked Don.

"My thought would have leaped to him at once because of his brilliancy," replied Phalos. "But I had something a little more definite than that. I turned over the bit of paper I had in my hand and saw that a name had been scribbled on it. Only a few of the letters remained, but I could make out 'urdy.'"

"Fairly conclusive," agreed the captain.

"Later on, when I met Mr. Sturdy," resumed Phalos, I could see that he was intensely excited over something. I tried to sound him out casually, but he evaded me. I was sure that he had made what he thought was a great discovery."

"That's what he must have had in mind when he kept talking to mother about the Tombs of Gold!" exclaimed Don.

"Did he really speak of them?" asked Phalos, much interested. "That goes still further toward confirming my suspicion. The thought that had been with him on and off for years must have taken full possession of him when his mind became deranged, to the exclusion of everything else."

"That makes it all the more likely," observed the captain, "that we'll find him some-

where in the vicinity of the Valley of the Kings, where the inscription was discovered."

"Precisely so," agreed the old Egyptian. "However, the search may lead him far afield, for I have reason to believe that the tombs themselves are at some distance from the place where the inscription was found. That inscription was placed there because the towering cliff offered the spot where it was most likely to endure for ages."

"It was certainly a lucky day for us when we met you on the steamer," declared Don enthusiastically.

"A luckier day for me," returned Phalos, with a smile. "Is it understood then?" he asked, turning to Don's uncles, "that we join hands and prosecute our search together?"

"Most gladly on our part," replied the captain and the professor in one breath.

"Then we'll consider it settled," said the old Egyptian. "I have a steam dahabiyeh moored in the river, and if you are agreeable, we will sail on that up the river to Luxor. I think you will find it the most pleasant mode of traveling, and there will be plenty of room for the baggage and supplies we shall need to take along."

"That will be fine," replied the captain. "And who knows but that the wishes of all our hearts may be fulfilled in the finding of my brother and also of the Tombs of Gold."

"All things are in the hands of Allah," re-

plied Phalos, who, although a cosmopolite, clung to the formula of his Mohammedan faith.

The next two days were busy ones for the adults of the party, as much had to be purchased in the way of implements and supplies for what might prove a long sojourn in the desert.

Don and Teddy had a good deal of time on their hands, and the professor suggested that they go out to Gizeh to see the Pyramids and the Sphinx. They needed no urging, for these mighty wonders of the world had long made a strong appeal to their imaginations. The boys had seen them pictured many times, but that was nothing compared to seeing the marvelous constructions that were old when Rome was young, and under whose shadows Cæsar and Napoleon had paced and been reminded of their own littleness.

Their elders were too busy to go with them, and besides had seen them before. So Don and Teddy secured a native guide and rode on donkeys toward the massive creations, the greatest built by human hands, that loomed up in the brightness of the Egyptian sunshine.

They were prepared to be impressed, but that word was too weak to express their feeling of awe when they stood before the largest pyramid of the three and gazed aloft at its towering top. Overpowered would have come nearer to their actual state of mind.

There the greatest of the three pyramids, that of King Cheops, reared itself toward the skies, originally nearly five hundred feet in height and with a base so broad that the boys had to trudge through the sands for half a mile before they had compassed it. It stood there, apparently as immutable as time itself, a tremendous monument of the great civilization that had once flourished on the banks of the Nile.

"How on earth could they build anything like that?" asked Teddy, under his breath.

"Uncle Amos says that nobody knows," replied Don. "He says that it's doubtful whether modern engineers could do it at all, even with the tools they have to-day and that they didn't have when these were built six thousand years ago. Probably it was done almost altogether by man power.

"Uncle Amos says that it took a hundred thousand men ten years just to build the sloping road that led up to it. And it took that many men thirty years to build this one Pyramid. They must have had ropes with thousands of men hauling the stones along on rollers and then pulling them up and piling them on each other."

"If one of the ropes broke, the stones tumbling down must have crushed hundreds at a time," remarked Teddy. "I guess it wasn't

peaches and cream to be a laborer in those days."

"I guess not," agreed Don. "Little old America is good enough for me."

Five hundred yards away from the Great Pyramid was the head of the Sphinx, that lion-bodied, human-headed mystery of the ages, carved out of the mother rock that forms the floor of the desert. Nearly two hundred feet from the tip of its paws to the end of its back, it rose sixty-five feet in the air, gazing out over the desert in immutable stony silence.

"What that could tell if it could speak," murmured Don.

After some further explorations the two boys turned toward the city, which lay white-walled and glittering in the afternoon sun.

That evening the captain, looking over one of his suitcases, noted the absence of one of his revolvers.

"I was cleaning and oiling some of my weapons down in the dahabiyeh," he said, after looking about fruitlessly for a time. "I thought I'd brought them all back here but I must have left that 38-caliber there. Would you mind running down there, Don, and taking a look for it? You'll find one of the men in charge."

"Sure, I will," responded Don, and went off at once.

The dahabiyeh of Zeta Phalos was perhaps a

quarter of a mile away moored to a wharf. Don had already visited it that morning, and had no trouble in reaching it. The native watchman, Ismillah, greeted him with a smile that showed all his gleaming teeth and helped Don look for the revolver, that had slipped behind one of the cushions.

With a word of thanks, Don turned to go back. As in most ports, the district along the waterfront was low and disreputable. The streets were narrow and ill-lighted.

As Don was passing along one of the darkest of the streets, two men stepped out from an alley and confronted him.

Don's heart gave a sudden bound as he recognized them.

They were Tezra and Nepahak!

CHAPTER XI

A Dash for Liberty

That the rascals had been waiting for Don was evident from the fact that they showed no surprise at the meeting. On the contrary, there was a look of evil determination on their faces that betrayed a deliberate plan. It was evident that they had been lurking about the Phalos villa, had seen the boy depart, noted his route and planned to waylay him on his return.

"So here you are," snarled Tezra, thrusting his face close to Don's.

"Don't seem to be anywhere else, do I?" answered Don, with an airiness that he was far from feeling.

"You will wish you were, before we get through with you," growled Nepahak, at the same time putting his hand to his belt.

Don had been thinking rapidly. Had the revolver he was carrying in his pocket been loaded, it would have put him more on a par with his enemies. But it contained no cartridges. He had seen that when he picked it up.

Revolvers, however, have more uses than

one. Don, who was as quick as lightning, plucked it from his pocket and threw it with all his force at Tezra's head. It struck that worthy full between the eyes, and he went down with a crash.

Scarcely waiting to see the result of the blow, Don lashed out with both fists at Nepahak. The latter had been staggered at the sudden downfall of his more dominant companion, to whom he played the role of jackal. He had no stomach for punishment, and, bewildered by the storm of blows that Don rained on him, made scarcely more than a pretext at resistance. In a moment he had turned and made off with as much speed as his short legs could master.

Tezra was trying to stagger to his feet. Had he been unconscious, Don would have stayed and done what he could for him, even though he was his enemy. As it was, Don picked up the revolver, with a mental blessing for the service it had rendered him, and hurried away until he had reached a broad and brightly lighted thoroughfare. Then he abated his speed, though still walking rapidly, until he reached the villa of Phalos.

"What's up?" asked his Uncle Frank quickly, as he noted Don's panting breath and his flushed face.

"Had a run in with those two beauties, Tezra and Nepahak," explained Don, sinking into a

chair and tossing the revolver on the table.

"Tezra and Nepahak!" exclaimed the professor. "Have those birds of evil omen turned up again?"

"Very much so," answered Don.

"Are you hurt?" asked the captain anxiously.

"Not a bit," was the answer. "Only winded. I beat it out of the neighborhood while the going was good."

"What became of the skunks?" asked Brick.

"The last I saw of them, Nepahak was legging it down the street and Tezra was just getting up from the sidewalk."

"I'm afraid you've been fighting again," said Brick, in mock reproof but with vast delight.

"Tell us just what happened," urged Professor Bruce.

"Those fellows stepped out of a dark alley and held me up," replied Don. "Told me they were going to make me wish I was somewhere else. As a matter of fact, that's just what I *was* wishing. I might have parleyed with them, but Nepahak was reaching for a knife. I remembered what you've told me about getting in the first blow, Uncle Frank, so I soaked Tezra with the revolver. Then I lammed into Nepahak, and he started running. I thought that was a good thing, so I started running too—in the opposite direction. That's all."

"That's all!" mimicked Brick. "Knocked the daylights out of both of them. That's all!"

"It seems to be quite enough," said the professor, with a smile.

"You're all there, my boy, and I'm proud of you. Trust the Sturdys to give a good account of themselves and live up to their name," observed the captain. "But it makes me uneasy to learn that Tezra and Nepahak have turned up again. I'm afraid it bodes no good for our friend Phalos or the purpose of our expedition."

Their host came in at that moment and caught the names of his enemies.

"What is it I hear about them?" he asked, with a worried face. "Are they in Cairo?"

"They were, up to a few minutes ago," replied Don, and repeated the essential parts of his adventure. Phalos listened intently.

"I'm glad you came so well out of it," he remarked, when Don had finished. "But it simply shows that my foreboding was correct when I told you they would not easily relinquish their purpose. It is possible that they meant to extort from you all that you knew about our proposed trip and then do away with you. The river was close at hand, and it has served as a cover for many tragedies."

"Could you not set the police on their tracks and put the villains in jail?" queried the professor.

"I suppose I could," replied Phalos. "But I hesitate to do that, because of the publicity that would attend to it. The reason for their attempts on me and this last attack on Don might come to light, and it would thus become known that I have this secret about the Tombs of Gold, or that Tezra and Nepahak suspect I have. And I want to keep that from the public at all hazards."

"How did those fellows learn that you had such a secret?" asked Don, voicing a question that had been more than once in the mind of each member of the party.

"I lay it to a thievish servant I once had," returned their host. "I made two copies of the inscription. One of these I kept always locked in the safe, of which I alone know the combination. The other was also usually deposited in the safe, but I took it out frequently to study it.

"One day, when I was looking it over, I was summoned suddenly out of the room on urgent business. Shortly after I returned I found that one of the sheets was missing. I searched for it everywhere, but could find no trace of it. I examined all the servants. All denied any knowledge of it. But one of them was so evasive and flustered that I felt sure he was the guilty one. I caught him later directly in the act of stealing household articles and discharged him."

"And your theory about the missing sheet is what?" asked the professor.

"That the man, knowing the store I set by the manuscript, stole it with the idea of selling it." replied Phalos. "He did not dare to take it all, but thought that one sheet would not be missed. Some time later I saw him on the street in close consultation with Tezra and Nepahak, who have an evil reputation in this city."

"What was on the missing sheet?" asked the captain.

"Just enough to tell that the inscription bore on the tombs of Ras-Ameses," replied Phalos. "Everybody in Egypt knows that his tomb has never been discovered and that it is supposed to contain fabulous riches. Luckily there was nothing on the stolen paper giving the slightest clue as to where the tomb was to be found."

"That was a bit of luck, but a precious one," observed Professor Bruce.

"Yes," answered Phalos, nodding his head. "But it was easy to jump to the conclusion that the rest of the manuscript told the story that the thieves were so anxious to know. They felt sure that I was in possession of the secret. Hence their persistent attempts to wrest it from me."

"I see," said the captain. "Tezra and

Nepahak believed that if they could find that tomb they would be rich for life."

"And I have no doubt they would," returned their host. "Rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

"Well, they'll have a sweet time getting the best of us," boasted Don.

The captain laughed, then, the look coming into his eyes that more than once had made his enemies quail, he observed:

"You are right, Don. They certainly will."

"I believe it," said Phalos, with a courteous inclination of his head. "And my mind is more at rest than it has been for months, now that I have such valuable reinforcements. All we can do now is to keep our eyes open and deal with those rascals as opportunity offers."

By the next afternoon, the preparations of the party were completed, and they embarked on the dahabiyeh, which was manned by a crew in which the owner had complete confidence.

Their voyage up the storied river was replete with beauty and romance. All the glory of ancient Egypt seemed embodied in that wonderful stream, that is in some respects the most remarkable river in the world. The senses of the Americans were fairly steeped in its glamour and mystery as they sat under the awnings in the day, with the sunlight falling on the rippling surface and reflected in a thou-

sand diamond glints, or at night, when the full moon flooded it with solemn splendor.

But the witchery of the mighty river could not divert Don's thoughts from his father.

Was he still alive? Had he succumbed to hardships? Was he wandering bewildered and dazed under the scorching suns of that foreign country? What had befallen him? Where would they find him, if they found him at all? And even if he were discovered and taken home, would all the skill in the world be able to restore the splendid mind he had been dowered with at birth?

All these questions kept tormenting Don without ceasing, and he had a furious impatience for the end of the journey. His heart leaped with joy when they finally reached Luxor, on the site of the former city of Thebes, the magnificent capital in ancient times of the kingdom of Egypt.

Dusk was still lingering in the sky when the dahabiyeh drew up to the city, but it was still light enough to see across the river the massive cliffs that hemmed in the Valley of the Kings, that royal mausoleum of scores of great rulers who had had to bow to a stronger hand than theirs, and yet even in death clung to the relics of their pomp and power.

Don thrilled as he looked at those towering cliffs. At their base was the far-famed Valley of the Kings. The words that had been so

often on his father's lips! The valley where even now his father might be laboring feverishly, following what? A genuine light or a mere will o' the wisp?

The boy could scarcely wait till daylight, and almost as soon as the dawn had reddened the sky he and the rest of his party, only less eager than himself, were afoot and getting ready for their trip.

They breakfasted well at the excellent hotel kept for the accommodation of tourists from all over the world who yearly visit the far-famed spot and who just then were in greater force than usual, drawn by the wonderful discoveries recently made at the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen.

There was still a certain freshness in the morning air when, after breakfast, the party set out; but by the time they had crossed the river the sun was beginning to make itself felt, and by the time they had reached the celebrated valley it was beating down on them with a fierceness that reminded them of the Sahara.

At last the huge piles of rubble and débris that testified to the work of the diggers apprized them of the approach to the most wonderful cemetery on earth.

A more desolate spot it would be hard to imagine. There was not the slightest trace of vegetation, not a tree, not a flower, not a blade of grass. The birds avoided it, and the only

trace of animal life was found in the bats that haunted the tombs in myriads.

But there was plenty of human life in evidence, men guarding the tombs and scores of others digging in the foothills that rose until they were lost in the mountainous cliffs that rimmed the valley.

The searching party passed the wonderful temple of Queen Hatshepsut, with its rows of pillars standing like sentinels against the dark mountain masses beyond. Soon they were at the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen, the most remarkable discovery of its kind in modern times.

Don had already heard of the romantic history of that discovery, how the hidden site had been passed over again and again, how for over sixteen years Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter had toiled among those dreary wastes, and how at last, when hope had almost been abandoned, the stubbing of a toe had revealed a step that led down into the tomb that proved a veritable treasure trove which threw all previous discoveries in the shade.

Now, with his companions, he gazed with fascinated interest on the many treasures that still remained, though most of them had been packed and sent to Cairo for safe keeping. They penetrated into the inner shrine and had a mere glimpse of the sarcophagus, at that time still unopened, that was believed to contain the mummy of the monarch who once

reigned supreme over Upper and Lower Egypt.

"Think what it must have meant," said the professor, who of all the party, with the possible exception of Phalos, most fully grasped the stupendous importance of the discovery, "when after all those years of strenuous toil and bitter disappointment, the discoverers penetrated into the outer chamber of the tomb.

"Their eyes were fairly dazzled by the wealth revealed to them. Its money value could be counted in millions, but it was not of this they were chiefly thinking. There were beautifully carved beds inlaid with ivory and semi-precious stones, golden sandals, chariots encrusted with gold and jewels, statues holding golden maces, chairs of ebony and ivory vases of alabaster and scores of other treasures so rich as to be almost unbelievable.

"Then there was a multitude of other things, which, while not so intrinsically valuable, were of immense importance in showing the life and customs of ancient Egypt—musical instruments, toys, clothes and robes for all occasions. There were rolls of papyri, which are expected, when deciphered, to add enormously to our knowledge of the times of the Pharaohs. And there were provisions for the dead on the last journey, trussed ducks, haunches of venison, all packed in the boxes where they were laid away by the royal chef, thirty-three centuries ago."

Teddy nudged Don.

"The Egyptians had some good ideas," he ventured in a whisper. "That last idea about the ducks and venison hits me hard."

"What did you say?" asked the professor, stopping short.

"I—I said the Egyptians had some good ideas," stammered Teddy, a flush suffusing his face.

CHAPTER XII

The Night Prowler

"I'm glad you are so interested," said Professor Bruce innocently. "Many of the people who come here have no real appreciation of what they see or hear. Their souls don't rise above material things."

Don gave Teddy a vigorous poke in the ribs that luckily passed unnoticed.

There were other tombs in the vicinity, that of Seti I and Amenophis II, the latter lying extended on his sarcophagus in the full glare of an electric light that seemed altogether too modern to be in harmony with a dwelling of the dead.

It was singular that the scene should have left no sense of depression on the spectators, such as they would have felt had they been in a modern cemetery. But so many centuries had elapsed that the tombs and their contents seemed to them merely historical relics. The haze of ages enveloped them. It was hard for them to think that the dried up mummies had once been breathing living figures, that before these kings, whom the superstitious people regarded as gods, thousands had bowed in

adoration, that upon their word hung the issues of life and death.

So it was with the feeling of being in a great museum that they passed from one to the other of the great monuments of antiquity adding momentarily to their knowledge of the mighty civilization that had flourished there in the dawn of recorded history, thousands of years before America had been discovered.

"Seems to me that the Egyptians thought more about dying than they did about living," commented Don.

"It would seem so at first sight," conceded the professor. "As a matter of fact, they got a good deal of enjoyment out of life. That is, the wealthier classes did. It must be admitted that the life of the poorer people was hard, much like that of the coolies of China to-day. But those with more money seemed to have indulged in all the pleasures that money could buy. The paintings on the walls of the palaces and temples show them at banquets, at races, engaged in hunting, and in all manner of sports."

"Why did they pay so much attention to their tombs, then?" asked Don.

"That was a result of their religion," replied his Uncle Amos. "It was of the greatest importance that the body should be preserved after death. The Egyptians believed that every human being possessed a double that

was a perfect duplicate of himself, and that the life of the double depended upon having a body to return to after its journey to the other world. If the double came back and found the body gone, it would perish. And the loss of immortality was too dreadful a thing to contemplate. That's why they took so much pains to embalm the body."

"Why did they have statues of the dead man in the tomb?" asked Don.

"That was to 'play safe,' as you would call it," answered the professor, with a smile. "There was always a chance that the body might be destroyed. In that case, the next best thing would be to have a likeness of the dead man for the double to come back into. And in order that the double shouldn't make a mistake, they painted the likeness of the man on the statue."

"So that the double wouldn't get in the wrong pew," murmured Teddy, but taking care this time that he should not be heard by his elders.

"In the case of kings," continued the professor, "there were usually several statues, so that if one were broken or stolen he would still have a chance for a future life."

"What was the idea of putting the provisions in the tomb?" asked Don, giving Teddy a surreptitious poke.

"Because the Egyptians believed that the

needs of the future would be very similar to those of the present," was the reply. "The soul, or double, would need food and drink just the same as the person did here. So jars of water and plenty of bread and meat were placed beside the mummy.

"Then, too, the rich man would need servants to wait on him. So they made little statuettes that were supposed to go with the double and do his work. The double would need a barge or other kind of boat to ferry him over the holy waters to the Fields of the Blessed. That was the reason for the boat that you saw in the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen."

"How about the people who were too poor to do that kind of thing?" asked Don.

"They got around it by having pictures of those things, the food and boats and other necessaries painted on the walls of the tomb," answered his uncle.

"Not much nourishment in that," Teddy whispered to Don.

"Those manuscripts you saw," continued the professor, "were what is called the 'Book of the Dead.' They told the dead man what answers to give when he stood before Osiris, the supreme judge who weighed his character and decided whether he was worthy to enter Paradise. Among other things, he was instructed to say: 'I have not stolen'; 'I have not lied'; 'I have not killed.' You see the gen-

eral idea of what was right and what was wrong was very much the same then as it is now."

The time passed quickly, and when the party emerged from the latest of the tombs they had visited, the sun was high in the heavens and the valley was like an oven.

As they passed the different gangs of diggers they made inquiries of the overseers regarding Mr. Sturdy. The officials listened with courtesy, and in some cases with interest, but none of them could give any information. None could be found who had seen such a man as Phalos or Professor Bruce described. Nor had they heard the name. The latter of course was not surprising, for, as Don bitterly reflected, his father did not even know his own name.

"No help to be gained from these sources," the captain summed up after a series of disheartening experiences. "It's strictly up to us to do the finding ourselves. Now let's get back to Luxor and make our final preparations."

There were many other wonders in the vicinity that under other circumstances the lads, especially, would have liked to visit, such as the Colossi of Memnon, the Temple of Karnak, but everything else must be abandoned or deferred in their overwhelming desire to find Don's father.

There had been much debate among the

members of the party as to the motive power of the expedition. The captain, remembering the value of the automobiles in their Sahara trip, would have preferred them. But inquiry both at Cairo and at Luxor had shown them that there was none to be had of the type wanted, and the ordinary kind without the caterpillar tread, would have been of no use in the desert.

Had they expected their search to be confined entirely to the Valley of the Kings, they would have used donkeys, the common mode of travel in that vicinity. But this idea also was abandoned, because of the supplies that would be needed for the animals.

So they finally decided on camels, the "ships of the desert," whose padded hoofs seemed especially made to travel the sandy wastes and who could go for days without water in case of necessity.

The captain and the professor, in their frequent journeys in Oriental countries, had learned to ride the beasts without difficulty. Teddy, too, during the time he was in charge of the Algerian, Alam Bokaru, master of camels, had become fairly expert.

To Don, however, though he had occasionally mounted one of the brutes, it was something to be mastered. But as they had to remain at Luxor for a couple of days, owing to the delay in receiving the permit for excavations, for

which Zeta Phalos had applied to the Egyptian Government, he had plenty of time to learn and had soon conquered the swaying, sickening sensations that beset the novice.

Who should accompany the party had been a subject of much thought on the part of Phalos.

"I do not think that we shall have to do much digging," he said, as he was discussing the matter with the captain and the professor. "If my indications are correct, it will be a matter of finding a certain entrance rather among the rocks than the sands. And the main thing, anyway, is to find that entrance. If we find that much excavation is needed, we can retrace our steps and get a force of laborers. In the meantime, the fewer we have with us, the better our chances of not having our secret betrayed."

"Right you are," agreed the captain.

"But we shall need some one to take care of the animals, shan't we?" asked Don, who was standing near.

"Yes," replied Phalos, smiling on the eager, level-headed boy. "And for that purpose I have fixed on Ismillah and Abdul. They have been in my household for years. Their fathers served my father. They are absolutely trustworthy and devoted to me. Ismillah is an excellent cook and handy man, and Abdul knows all there is to be known about camels."

So it was settled, and after the permits had arrived and all the supplies secured that would be needed for the trip, the searchers set out on their double quest—to seek for Mr. Sturdy and for the Tombs of Gold.

The first was by far the most important, to the Americans of the party at least, and it was to this they gave their chief attention.

They traversed the Valley of the Kings, stopping at every place where excavations were going on to make inquiries of the foremen in charge. But always the answer was in the negative, until a doubt began to creep into Don's mind whether his father had ever reached the spot that had possessed so strong a fascination for his deranged mind. When two days had thus been passed fruitlessly, this doubt became almost a conviction.

In the course of their journeying, they passed the cliff from which Phalos had copied the inscription. It was at a dizzy height, and increased their respect for the man who had dared its perils.

The captain unslung his field glasses and passed them around, so that all could have a look at the curious writing that had withstood the centuries. They studied it with interest, Don far more acutely than that of any other member of the party, because of his belief that his father had also risked his life in securing a copy of those queer hieroglyphics.

"How on earth could any one read such writings?" asked Teddy.

"They couldn't up to a little more than a hundred years ago," replied Zeta Phalos, with a smile. "The knowledge of it had passed utterly out of the mind of man for nearly two thousand years.

"Then, at the time Napoleon was in Egypt, one of his engineers in digging a fort uncovered a stone, not much bigger than you could carry in your hands, that had on it three different kinds of writing. One was Greek, another was in the writing of the common people of old Egypt, and the third was in the writing used by the Egyptian priesthood similar to what you see up there. The stone was called the Rosetta stone, and is now in the British Museum.

"Of course, the Greek could be read, and scholars were struck by the idea that the other inscriptions referred to the same thing. So they compared the Greek with the other characters and so learned what the symbols meant. That was the beginning, and before long they had an old Egyptian grammar and dictionary. That little stone proved to be the key that unlocked the whole vast storehouse of Egyptian history."

As they moved on the surroundings gradually assumed a desert character. The cliffs

grew lower and were in many places replaced by sand dunes.

Don's attention was attracted by the countless little heaps of stones they passed, each consisting of a little upright slab of rock, held in place by others on each side.

"What are those, Uncle Amos?" he asked.

"Prayer stones," answered the professor, after a casual glance. "They are the prayers of travelers to the gods of their city that they might have a prosperous journey. Those fragments of pottery indicate that a bowl, probably containing water, was set beside each pile."

"A prosperous journey," mused Don, as he thought of the object of his own search, and though he did not erect a similar pile, there was a prayer in his heart.

On the night of the second day they made their preparations to pitch camp. A tent was soon erected, and while Abdul fed, watered and tethered the camels, Ismillah prepared a meal that fully justified his master's opinion of him as a cook.

After supper, the travelers stretched themselves out on the sands, enjoying the faint breeze that had sprung up after sunset and studying the splendor of the Egyptian sky, studded with stars that glowed like so many jewels. Above them spread the Milky Way, like a spray of silver dust.

"The Nile of the heavens," murmured the professor.

"What do you mean?" asked Don.

"The old Egyptians considered the Milky Way the Nile of the future life," was the answer. "They used to fancy that the departed ones were sailing up and down that, just as they used to sail the Nile when they were alive."

"Quite a poetical fancy," remarked the captain.

"How nice and homelike," said the irreverent Teddy. "You could just look up and say, 'There goes Aunt Jemima.' "

The professor looked rather shocked, but the captain laughed.

"I'm afraid you're a hopeless case, Teddy," he said. "But now I guess we'd better turn in. We want to get an early start to-morrow before the sun becomes too hot."

His suggestion was followed and all except Don were soon sound asleep.

But the boy tossed about restlessly on his blanket. It was not the heat that prevented him from sleeping, for he had become inured to that in the Sahara.

It was the tormenting uncertainty as to his father's fate. He had felt hopeful of finding him in the Valley of the Kings. With each new gang of workmen discovered, his heart had thrilled with the thought that perhaps these

were the ones his father had employed, and every time his hopes had been dashed to the ground. Would he ever find him?

A sound came to him from without. He propped himself up on his elbow and listened. Again he heard it, faint but unmistakable. It seemed to come from the direction of the camels.

Silently he crept out from the shelter of the tent and looked toward the tethered camels.

As his eyes accustomed themselves to the darkness, he could make out the gaunt figures of the beasts. Then gradually he saw something else—the figure of a man moving about stealthily.

With a shout Don rushed toward him.

CHAPTER XIII

A Deadly Menace

The figure seemed to melt away on the further side of the camels, which had been roused by Don's shout and stood upright swaying their shaggy heads. They formed a screen that served perfectly the purpose of the marauder, and by the time Don had circled about the animals the man was not to be seen.

Don strained his eyes in every direction, but could see nothing. The night had swallowed up the man as though he had never been.

The shout had roused the other members of the party, and they came rushing out, the captain in the van with his rifle in his hand.

"What is it?" he asked, as they all crowded around Don.

"There was a man here busy among the camels," explained Don. "I rushed at him and he disappeared."

The professor had his flashlight, and they turned it upon the group of camels, which, they were glad to see, were all there.

An exclamation came from the captain.

"Here's what he was doing," he cried, as he pointed to one of the ropes that was almost cut through.

"A thief!" ejaculated the professor.

"Perhaps," said Phalos, with a worried look on his face. "But then again, it may have been more than a case of common theft."

"What do you mean?" asked Don. "Do you think," he went on, as a thought struck him, "that Tezra and Nepahak had a hand in this?"

Phalos nodded assent.

"That is what I fear; though of course I do not know," he said. "The design may have been to cripple the expedition and make it move more slowly by the theft of one or more of the camels. That would make it easier for them to keep us in sight."

"But if they keep us in sight, that will mean that we will also have sight of them," remarked Don.

"I do not mean literally 'in sight,'" explained Phalos. "But they can keep on our trail while staying just beyond reach of our vision. I have a presentiment that they are following us. They are men who will stop at nothing."

"We should have set a guard," said the captain. "We will after this. I'll take my turn to-night. And if any of those fellows try the same trick again," he added, as he handled his rifle significantly, "it will go hard with them."

He took his position at the door of his tent, and the rest resumed their attempts at slumber, although there was little sleep for the remainder of the night.

Nothing further developed, and they roused at dawn, made a hasty breakfast and started on.

"I have been thinking," said Phalos, "that it would be well to use a little strategy to throw possible pursuers off our track. They probably think that we are going to the water hole of El Ira, since we are headed in that direction. But Abdul, I find, knows of another water hole off to the right that will require quite a wide circle to reach it. I would suggest that we take that route, and after replenishing our water supplies, strike out for the place where I believe we will find the Tombs of Gold. I think that plan may balk our enemies."

This was decided on, and the party moved ahead under Abdul's direction, turning many a look behind as they rode with a view to detecting possible pursuers.

Suddenly, the camel on which Don was riding stopped with a jerk that nearly unseated the boy. Teddy was riding beside him and his mount stopped at the same moment with similar suddenness.

"What on earth's the matter with him?" exclaimed Don, as he urged the camel forward.

But the beasts refused to move a step, and now Don discovered that the animal was trembling.

He looked about to see the reason. Suddenly, he discovered in the sand a few feet ahead a horrid swaying head with what seemed to be horns and a pair of fierce, wicked eyes that glowed like fire.

At first he could see no body. The creature seemed to be all head. But as Don looked more closely, he could see a shape of light brownish color with yellow spots, partly hidden in the sand. The eyes were glowing like those of a basilisk, and the body began to coil as though for a spring.

Quick as thought, Don reached for his rifle, took swift aim and fired. The bullet smashed the head of the creature, and the sand went up in clouds, as the body thrashed about furiously.

"Good shooting!" cried Teddy admiringly, as they dismounted to examine the reptile.

"What's the shooting about?" asked the captain, as he came riding up with the rest of the party.

"This," answered Don, as he prodded the snake with the muzzle of his rifle.

"A cerastes!" exclaimed the captain, who recognized it at once. "It's one of the deadliest snakes in the world. If you were bitten by that, you'd be dead in half an hour."

"Cleopatra's asp," pronounced the professor. "It was one of those with which the Egyptian Queen committed suicide."

"Ugh!" exclaimed Teddy. "It isn't the thing I'd choose for a bosom friend. I'm more particular about my company."

"It's lucky your camel saw it when he did," remarked the professor. "The snake would surely have bitten him as he passed. They're the more dangerous because they can scarcely be detected in the sand. A great many horses and camels are killed by them in Egypt every year."

The suggestion by Abdul that the snakes usually traveled in pairs was sufficient to make the travelers mount in a hurry. But the mate of the dead snake, if it were in the vicinity, failed to make itself seen or felt, and they went on unmolested, though keeping a sharp lookout on the sands ahead.

"I suppose, Don, a snake more or less is nothing in your young life, after all you killed or captured in Brazil," remarked Teddy, with a laugh.

"That's one case where familiarity hasn't bred contempt," answered Don. "It was in Brazil that I learned to respect them, sometimes to run from them, as in the case of the cooanaradi."

"Call it coon and let it go at that," laughed Teddy. "Why did it chase you?"

"Because it loved me and couldn't bear to part with me," answered Don dryly. "It was a big twelve-footer and fairly soaking with poison. The only thing I had with me was a machete. I swung just as it overtook and sprang for me, and by good luck sliced its head from its body. More than once since then I've dreamed that it was chasing me."

They were preparing to pitch their tents for the midday rest when a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon ahead of them.

In the desert every man is an enemy until he is found to be a friend, and the camping was deferred, the party remaining on their camels while they awaited the figures that soon detached themselves from the dust and rapidly became larger.

"Get your rifles ready," commanded the captain. "We'll have to see who these fellows are. They may be Bedouins out on a raid, or they may be peaceful traders. We'll soon know."

As the approaching party came more distinctly into view, apprehension vanished, for the laden camels showed that it was an ordinary trading caravan of small size.

The caravan halted and all looked curiously at the captain's party. Phalos and the captain rode toward them with shouted salutations and signs of friendliness, which were returned in the same spirit.

Phalos interrogated the leader as to whether he had seen any man who resembled Mr. Sturdy, describing him as a tall man with black hair.

No, the leader had seen no such man. He had, however, seen a tall man with white hair or nearly white. He had seen him with a party digging near a mound, some thirty miles further on.

Had he talked with him?

No, there was something about the man's eyes that had made him feel queer. But he had talked with some of the workmen. They had told him that they were going to quit, that their employer had told them he would soon have no more money to pay them. Besides, they thought that the man had been marked by Allah. They had grown afraid. So they were going away.

This was the sum of the information they got from the leader of the caravan, and they returned and reported to the rest of the party, while the traders moved on.

It was not very definite, certainly not conclusive, but it brought to all of them an immense accession of hope. Don was elated beyond measure.

"Of course, father's hair was black when I saw him last!" he exclaimed. "But what he has been through may have changed it."

"The news is certainly encouraging," said

the captain. "Though don't build too much upon it, Don."

"It is significant to me," remarked Phalos, "that the locality the man indicated is very close to that where I believe the Tombs of Gold to be situated."

"Don't you think the time has come to take us fully into your secret?" asked the captain. "Suppose anything happened to you! You might be sunstruck, become disabled in some way. In that case, our expedition will have come to nothing."

"You are right," agreed Zeta Phalos. "You shall know now all that I know myself," and during the midday rest period he went into a careful calculation of facts and figures with the captain and the professor, while Don and Teddy listened with the greatest interest and attention.

The boys did not grasp all the calculation, but one outstanding thing that impressed them was that the place would be indicated by a rock shaped something like a pyramid, balanced upon another rock, flat in shape but larger than the first.

They journeyed hard and fast that afternoon and till well into the evening in the direction indicated by the leader of the caravan. And when they camped for the night, they were confident that, barring accidents, they would be

within striking distance of their goal before the following night closed in on them.

The next day was the hottest that they had yet encountered. The sun beat down on them with terrific fury. They were tortured with sunburn and by innumerable swarms of sand-flies, the plague of Egypt.

They allowed themselves only a short rest period and pushed on.

Before long they came to a place where a rocky wilderness stretched away to the right of the road they were traversing. Here, after a consultation of his map and a discussion with Don's uncles, Zeta Phalos determined to leave the camels in the care of Ismillah and Abdul and push into the wilderness on foot. The camels would have been of little use to them on those rocky slopes, and in addition Phalos was quite as well satisfied to dispense with the servants for the last stage of the trip. He believed them trustworthy, but preferred to have only the Americans with him if his goal were actually discovered.

A cave that offered a secure hiding place for the servants and the camels was found, and it was not long before the searchers had occasion to be thankful that they had taken the precaution.

As they clambered up the slope, amid the huge rocks with which it was strewn, Don's

keen eyes detected a body of riders in the distance coming fast toward them.

Instantly he communicated his discovery to the others and they sank down behind the rocks that shielded them from view.

"They're coming fast," muttered the captain, "and they are coming in the direction we came. If it's that Tezra bunch, they're tired of pussyfooting."

"They may think that the time has come to attempt to capture us and make us lead them to the place we're seeking," murmured Phalos.

As the cavalcade drew nearer it could be seen that it comprised more than a dozen heavily-armed riders of fierce appearance.

"Bedouins whom Tezra has enlisted by promise of loot," conjectured Phalos.

The captain slipped his glasses to Don, who was lying close beside him.

"You know the rascals better than I do," he said. "See if you can recognize them."

Don focused the glasses on the leaders.

"There they are!" he whispered excitedly. "Tezra and Nepahak! Those two in front."

"As I suspected," muttered the captain.

The party swept on and was soon lost to view.

"Fooled for the time being, anyway," said Captain Sturdy, as he rose. "Now it's up to us to act quickly."

The Americans and Phalos worked their way

along among the boulders, gazing eagerly in all directions for their landmark.

Suddenly Don gave a shout.

"There it is," he cried, pointing straight ahead of him. "I see it. The rock!"

The other members of the party looked in the direction of Don's pointing finger.

There, sure enough, loomed up a curious combination of two rocks, both of large size, the upper one shaped something like a pyramid, and the lower one, on which it rested, flat and a rough square in shape.

Don had been in the rear of the party with Teddy, but it was his sharp sight that marked the goal.

There was a shout of jubilation from all the members of the group, and they hastened as fast as the difficult ground would let them in the direction of the rock.

Don was behind, but was hurrying after the others and rapidly overtaking them when suddenly the ground seemed to give way beneath him. He had a sensation of falling—down—down.

Then came a sharp shock and he knew no more.

CHAPTER XIV

In Utter Darkness

How long it was before he returned to consciousness, Don could not tell. It might have been minutes or it might have been hours.

Slowly, very slowly, he was able to recall what had happened to him. He had seen the cavalcade riding past. Then he had been clambering among the rocks. It had been a long climb, he remembered. There were many of the rocks and the slope had been steep. He must have barked his shins against some of them. They were very sore. Yes, he must have barked his shins. Careless of him, to be sure, but a little arnica would fix them up all right.

Was there anything else? He tried to think. Oh, yes, he had called out something. What was it he had been shouting about? Oh, it was the rock! Of course, it was the rock. Why had he not thought of that before? Well, he had thought of it now. That was something. He felt rather proud about that rock. He had been the first to see it. Good boy, Don. You are not so bad!

He lay for a moment, pleased with the recollection.

What else was there? He and Teddy had started running for it. Good old Brick! They had been running pretty fast. Why had they not got to it then? Where was the rock? Where was he?

Then suddenly the truth burst on him, and he sat up with a start, a cold perspiration breaking out all over his body.

He remembered the ground seemingly melting under his feet, the sickening descent, the crash.

He looked wildly about him, but he might as well have been blind for all that he could see. Even his hand was not visible, as he held it up before his face.

He felt of his arms and his legs, with an awful fear that one or more of them might have been broken. But they were whole, as far as he could tell, and when he tried to move them they responded.

But he was torn and scratched in innumerable places and blood was trickling from his wounds.

He dragged himself up to a standing position and propped himself against an earth wall that he could feel but not see. But his head swam so that he had to sit down again, for fear he should fall.

It was strange, he thought, that there was no

light in the place. If there had been a hole for him to fall through, there should be a hole for light to come through. But absolute blackness met him as he turned his eyes upward.

He steadied himself and tried to think. What should he do? How could his uncles find him? What would Brick—

Brick! He had been right beside him. Had he also—Could he—

"Brick!" he called.

There was no answer.

"Brick!" he repeated.

There was a faint rustling, and a weak voice answered:

"That you, Don?"

The next instant Don was making his way in the direction of the voice. He caught an outstretched groping hand and his own tightened convulsively over it.

For a moment both were too deeply moved to speak. Don was the first to break the silence.

"Are you hurt, old boy?" he asked anxiously.

"Somewhat disfigured, but still in the ring," answered Teddy, with a touch of his old levity, though his voice was far from steady. "You see you can't shake me. I came along with you. I'm sore as a boil, but no bones broken, as far as I know. How in the mischief did we get down here?"

"How in the mischief are we going to get out?" responded Don.

"I'd give a good deal to know," complained Teddy.

"Let's feel our way around these walls and see if they suggest anything," said Don.

Still badly shaken, but with their strength coming back and their heads momentarily growing clearer, the two boys groped about the walls of their prison. They discovered an almost cylindrical passage extending upward that seemed to be the one through which they had made their unexpected descent.

"Give me a back, Brick."

Teddy bent over, and Don mounted on his back. But with hands extended to the uttermost he could touch nothing above.

Climbing was out of the question, for the walls, though of earth, were as hard and smooth as though they had been shaped by machinery and offered no crevices to which hands or feet could cling.

"Do you know, Brick, I don't believe we fell through any natural opening. If we had, there'd be some light coming from up there. The hole wouldn't have closed up so suddenly."

"What's your idea then?" asked Teddy wonderingly.

"I think there was a hinged door there, concealed by earth, that sprang back again when

St. Andrew's Inn

it dumped us here. A trap laid, perhaps, by the old Pharaoh to catch anybody who should come prying about his tomb."

"The old gink!" exclaimed Teddy. "Who'd ever thought he had such a sour disposition?"

"That would explain why the walls are so smooth," continued Don. "If anyone wasn't killed by the fall he couldn't climb up again. Well, we're in for it now, and we're up against it for fair."

"They must be looking for us outside," said Teddy, sobered by their plight. "Suppose we shout to them. They may hear us."

It was a good suggestion, and they shouted till their throats were so hoarse they could do little else but whisper.

But there were no answers except the echoes.

For some time after the boys had realized that their efforts were fruitless, they remained without speaking. Each was busy with his own thoughts. And they were not pleasant ones. Their situation dawned on them in all its horrors.

They were trapped, shut out, perhaps forever, from the sight of men, doomed possibly to die amid the lingering agonies of hunger and thirst in this subterranean enclosure, to which greater terrors were added by the darkness.

Life was sweet to them. They had barely tasted its delights, were merely standing on its

threshold. The blood ran strongly through their veins. Were they to be cheated of their birthright?

From these gloomy meditations, Don roused himself with a determined shake of his shoulders.

"Brace up, Brick," he counseled. "We're worth a dozen dead men yet. Let's see if we can't find some way out of this hole."

They felt around the walls until they found a passage, so narrow that it permitted them to walk abreast only by crowding against each other.

"Let's go," said Don. "Whatever it leads to can't be any worse than this."

They had gone along for perhaps a hundred feet when suddenly their feet slipped out from under them and they sat down with a thud on a pavement as smooth as glass and shot down a steep slope as swiftly as though they were on a toboggan!

CHAPTER XV

A Frightful Apparition

Startled, confused, bewildered beyond measure, Don and Teddy were whirled down the steep incline at a dizzy speed, until at last they were thrown out on the stone floor at its foot in a medley of tossing arms and legs.

But the one predominant feeling in their minds as they scrambled to their feet and looked at each other, in a consternation that would have been ludicrous under any other circumstances, was that now they could really see each other!

They were in the light, the blessed light; not brilliant, but mellowed and full of shadows. There was no visible source to which it could be traced, but it was light, and as they looked into each other's eyes half the horror of their situation seemed to have vanished. It brought to each a reinforcement of hope and courage.

"Gee!" exclaimed Teddy, as he shook himself. "Talk about shooting the chutes! That has the big one at Coney Island beaten to a frazzle."

"It sure does," agreed Don, as he looked at the slope down which they had sped and marveled at its mirrorlike smoothness.

The boys looked about them to see what kind of a place it was into which they had been so abruptly ushered. They found themselves in a great spacious room, from which a series of doorways at intervals led into smaller ones. The roof was high and slightly arched. On the walls was an almost endless series of paintings that represented almost every possible scene and custom of ancient Egyptian life.

They recognized at once the similarity to the paintings they had seen on their first memorable visit to the tombs of Tut-ankh-Amen and the other monarchs in the Valley of the Kings.

"This must be a tomb," said Don. "Or perhaps one of the antechambers to a tomb. But it's on a vastly bigger scale than anything we've ever seen before."

"I should say it was!" agreed Teddy, as his eyes took in its proportions. "The others are only also-rans as compared with this. The fellow this was built for must have been some big bug in his day."

The lads wandered about the room, studying with interest the scenes depicted on the walls. They had all the stiffness that marks the work of the Egyptian artists, but apart from that, were surprisingly good and accurate.

"I've always thought the Egyptians were sad fellows," remarked Teddy. "But if these paintings tell the truth, they were pretty gay old boys if you ask me."

There were pictures of royal banquets with wine and flowers in profusion, minstrels playing, men and women dancing, and buffoons and clowns adding their part to the merriment. One dancer was bearing the body of another on his head as he whirled about. Everything in these pictures indicated abandonment to the material pleasures of life.

But there were more stately scenes, troops of soldiers marching through the streets crowded with spectators on both sides, solemn religious ceremonies in the temples with the priests in full regalia. Other pictures represented hunting scenes, fights with lions, chariot races, wrestling, and various athletic sports.

Still others, more in keeping with a mortuary chamber, showed the progress of the soul after it had left the body and embarked on its stormy voyage amid the perils of the underworld and beset by demons that sought to check its progress before it could reach the presence of Osiris and the realms of bliss.

"Look at these cartoons!" exclaimed Teddy, as he came to lighter specimens of the painter's art. "I've seen worse in some of the evening papers."

He pointed to a hippopotamus seated among

the leaves of a tree at a table while a crow was climbing a ladder to wait on him. A cat, walking on its hind legs, drove a flock of geese, while a wolf, carrying a staff and knapsack, led a herd of goats. A battle between mice and cats was shown, with the king of the mice, in a chariot drawn by two dogs, attacking the fortress of the cats.

"The fellow that drew those was throwing himself away," declared Teddy. "He could have got a good salary in New York."

But while these novel things served a good purpose for a time in diverting the boys' minds from their troubles, the latter soon returned with redoubled force, especially when the lads saw that the light was waning. They dreaded the coming of the dark in those surroundings.

"It's a good thing in one way, though," said Don, in answer to Teddy's comment on the growing shadows. "It shows that it's natural light. It must come in from somewhere; and that somewhere must lead to the outside world. We'll see if we can't find out where that is when morning comes."

They sat down touching each other, for the comfort of companionship, and took stock of their store of provisions. The result was anything but satisfactory.

Don had a few crackers in his pocket and a couple of cakes of chocolate. Besides these, his canteen was two-thirds full of water. The

sum total of Teddy's possessions was comprised in a sandwich and a couple of seed cakes that Ismillah had given him. And his canteen was less than half full.

"Gee!" groaned Teddy, "if we only had some of those ducks and haunches of venison that Tut-ankh-Amen never touched! I wouldn't do a thing to them!"

"I don't suppose they'd be much good after three thousand years," remarked Don, with a lugubrious smile. "Still, if there were any here and I were starving, I'd take a hack at them. We'll look around to-morrow morning and see if we can find any."

The shadows gradually deepened until they were in blackness so deep it could be felt. In those sepulchral surroundings, the situation was enough to daunt the stoutest heart.

Suddenly a blood-curdling shriek rang through the vaulted chamber.

The boys sprang to their feet in horror.

Again the shriek rang out, dying away in groans and moanings. Then their eyes almost burst from their head as they saw a great white-sheeted figure, revealed in an unearthly light. It seemed to advance upon them, waving its arms menacingly!

CHAPTER XVI

In the Grip of Doom

The first impulse of the boys was to flee. But their limbs refused to obey them. They were as though paralyzed, rooted to the spot. Their hearts seemed to stop beating and their blood turn to ice.

Then, when it seemed to be almost upon them, the dreadful figure faded away as suddenly as it had appeared and they were again shrouded in darkness.

They were shaking as if with an ague, and neither felt ashamed of it. Coming on top of what they had already endured that day, the shock was almost beyond bearing.

They fell rather than sat down on the stone floor, their hands closely interlocked.

"Oh, Don, what was it?" quavered Teddy. "A ghost?"

"Ghost, nothing!" declared Don, trying to infuse stoutness into his denial. "You know as well as I do that there's no such thing as a ghost."

"I never did believe it till now," said Teddy.

"But what was that, if it wasn't a ghost? Lots of people believe in them. Perhaps it's the old king this tomb belongs to, and he's come to warn us against coming here."

"Nonsense!" replied Don.

"What was it then if it wasn't a ghost?" challenged Don's companion.

"How do I know?" countered Don, who by this time was getting back some of his usual self-possession. "It may have been some crazy person. Heaven knows, it's enough to make any one crazy to be in here. It may have been a trick of some kind. Perhaps this is a robbers' cave, and that's a way they have to scare out intruders. I don't know what it was, but I'm dead sure that it isn't a ghost. And you know it isn't, either."

"I suppose it isn't," admitted Teddy, as common sense once more took the helm. "But it sure had me going for a minute."

"Me, too," confessed Don. "I never had such a scare thrown into me in my life."

"If only it doesn't come back!" sighed Teddy.

"If I had my rifle with me, I'd put a bullet in it," declared Don, bitterly regretting the absence of his weapon, which had flown from his hand when he fell.

"One thing is certain, that I won't get a wink of sleep to-night," affirmed Teddy, star-

ing fearfully through the dark in the direction from which the ghostly visitor had come.

"I guess I'm with you there," replied Don.

But nature was stronger than all their beliefs and resolutions, and before long they were sleeping the sleep of absolute exhaustion, from which they did not wake until a pale suffusion of light through the cavern told them it was morning.

The light, faint as it was, brought them new courage. And if they ever needed courage, it was then.

They were ravenously hungry, but they took only a nibble at their scanty store, far more precious to them at the moment than its weight in gold. They washed it down with a mere swallow of water, and then set about discovering a way of escape from what was now their prison, but threatened to become their tomb.

"Do you know, Brick," said Don thoughtfully, "I've changed my opinion about that place we fell down? I don't believe it was a trap."

"What was it then?" asked Teddy.

"I think it was an entrance for those who were supposed to have a right to come here," replied Don. "In the first place, if they'd wanted to kill intruders, they'd probably have made a better job of it—put a few spikes at the bottom for them to be caught on, or some playful thing like that."

"Don't!" urged Brick, with a shudder.

"You see it didn't kill us," pursued Don.

"Born to be hung, perhaps," conjectured Teddy.

"And then too they wouldn't have left that passage open to the tomb," continued Don. "They'd have walled that hole all the way around. But they didn't. They left it open for their own purposes."

"Well, suppose they did, what does all this lead to?"

"Just this," replied Don. "That those who came in that way didn't expect to go back that way. No one could climb up that toboggan. It's too steep and it's too slippery, and there's absolutely nothing to hold on to. You might as well try to climb up a looking glass.

"Now if they didn't expect to go back that way, they must have meant to get out some other way. Get me?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Teddy, as a light broke in on him. "You mean there's some other entrance to this place?"

"Yes," replied Don. "Though in our case, as it was in theirs, it will be an exit. There must be some such place, and it's up to us to find it."

The boys drew new hope from the conclusion and set out at once to look for their one hope of safety. They tried to find the source from which the light filtered in, thinking, nat-

urally, that this would be the key to the enigma.

But search as they would, the secret evaded them. The marvelously cunning architects and engineers of ancient times had done their work well, if their intention was to confuse and bewilder any unwarranted visitor.

Another proof of ingenuity soon warned them of the necessity of keeping together. They found that the many rooms that surrounded the central hall were arranged on the principle of a maze or labyrinth, with so many and such unexpected openings, one into the other, that it was almost impossible to meet at any agreed spot. And there were so many of these rooms and passages that the vast underground construction suggested the Catacombs of Rome.

In the middle of the day they took another morsel of food and a swallow of water. Soon even this would be denied them. Again they set out on their desperate quest, tightening their belts to still the gnawings of hunger. Their tongues became swollen and their lips cracked from the thirst that tortured them.

The coming of the night found them again at their rendezvous in the central hall, baffled and defeated, no nearer the solution of their terrible problem than when they had started in the morning.

A tiny morsel of food and a sip of water

were all they dared allow themselves. Then, haggard and hollow-eyed, they crouched as near as they could get to each other and—waited.

For what?

The same unspoken thought was in the mind of each.

Would that terrible figure appear again?

CHAPTER XVII

Trapped

When Don had raised his shout of discovery Captain Sturdy, Professor Bruce and Phalos had rushed in the direction of the rock that reared itself near the top of the rugged slope.

At times it was obscured by other boulders, and they had difficulty in getting their bearings, but they kept steadily getting nearer, and at last they stood before it.

With a trembling hand Zeta Phalos drew from his pocket the precious copy of the inscription. He and the professor bent over it, eagerly comparing point to point the indications on it, while the captain waited impatiently.

At last the two straightened up with delight in their eyes.

"No doubt about it!" exclaimed the professor. "It answers every requirement. Now to find a way in."

A feverish search was made, and finally a crevice was discovered into which a man might worm himself behind the towering rock.

The captain turned about and shouted: "Come along, Don! Come along, Teddy!"

He thought he heard them respond, although it was only an echo. Then, dropping on hands and knees, he worked his way through the opening.

The others, who were smaller and slenderer, followed the captain's example, and all three were presently on the other side of the rock and in a narrow passage.

They straightened up and brushed off their clothes, expecting every instant to see the boys following them.

But no other form darkened the opening, and the captain grew impatient.

"Hurry up, boys!" he shouted.

The words had scarcely left his lips when there was a tremendous crash, and the delicately balanced upper rock came down, filling the entire opening and leaving them in utter darkness.

The roar was deafening in that confined space, and beat upon their eardrums until it seemed as though they would burst. And a cloud of dust arose that was suffocating.

The captain, inured to dangers and to quick thinking, was the first to realize what had happened.

"Trapped!" he roared. "Trapped! Penned in like so many rats!"

He rushed against the heavy stone and

heaved against it with all the strength of his powerful shoulders. But strain as he would, he could not make it budge. And as he remembered its giant size, he realized that it must weigh scores of tons. He might as well have tried to move a mountain.

As this conviction came to him, he desisted from his efforts and came slowly towards his companions.

"Lucky that the boys are not in here with us," he remarked, his habitual calmness returning to him. "They, at least, have their chance. It is singular, too," he mused. "Don, especially, is usually right up to the front at a time like this. Didn't you think they were following us?"

"I thought I heard them answer you when you called to them," replied the professor. "But, after all, that may have been only the echo of your voice."

"Possibly," rejoined the captain. "But, at any rate, they must be right outside now. We must communicate with them and get them to go to Ismillah and Abdul for help. With our united efforts, we may be able to make an exit."

He approached the rock, called out as loudly as he could and hammered on the rock with the butt of his rifle. But no response came, and, at last, sorely puzzled, he abandoned the attempt.

"Well," Professor Bruce said grimly, "the

old Pharaoh has sprung the trap. His dead hand has reached out through forty centuries and tricked us."

"What do you mean?" asked the captain.

"What I say," was the reply. "You don't suppose that it was mere accident that caused that stone to fall just at this minute, do you?"

"The long arm of coincidence—"

"Nothing of the kind," interrupted the professor. "That rock was balanced so perfectly that it would fall when a hidden spring was pressed. And we pressed that spring when we stepped on one of the blocks in this paved passage. Those old fellows were marvels when it came to bits of infernal ingenuity like that."

"It is probable," observed Phalos.

"The very fact that there was an opening there should have warned us," admitted the captain. "Why should entrance have been so easy? Simply to lure us in, so that we could be punished for our presumption. 'Will you walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly.' Well, we've walked in all right, and if the spider knows anything where he is, I'll bet he is grinning at us this moment."

He communed with himself a moment in bitter self-reproach, while Phalos and Professor Bruce, both silently, tried to work out some plan of procedure.

"Well," the captain resumed at last, with a return of his old nonchalant manner, "there's

no use crying over spilt milk. We're here, and that's all there is about it. We're all grown men, and we're all of us able to face the truth. I believe I'm betraying no confidence," he added with grim humor, "when I say that we're in a very serious situation. But we've all been in others quite as serious and emerged with a whole skin, and perhaps history will repeat itself."

"I'm thankful, at least, that the boys are not with us," remarked the professor.

"Amen to that," said Phalos. "To a large extent, we at least have lived our lives. They have theirs before them."

"And there are other bits of silver linings to our clouds," resumed the captain. "In the first place, we have pretty good proof that no one else has preceded us. So if we find the tomb at all, we'll find it unrifled.

"Then, again, I had the luck to shove our bag of provisions through the hole before I crawled in myself," he continued. "There are several extra canteens of water there too, besides those we have strapped to us. So we have enough with care to last us for a week or so, if we have to stay here that long."

"That's good," observed the professor. "And, as we can't go back, we'd better go forward at once."

"Yes, let's be getting along," the captain said, picking up the bag of provisions and

slinging it over his shoulder, while in the other hand he carried his rifle. "As Amos says, we can't go back, and so we'll make a virtue of necessity and go forward. That, after all, is what we came for."

They went on carefully, picking their steps along a paved passage, so narrow that they had to go single file.

The path sloped steadily downward, so that they knew they were going into the bowels of the earth. The air was heavy and dank, and yet there was at times the faintest perceptible stirring of the air that showed there must be some communication with the outer world. The reflection gave them new courage, and they quickened their steps, the captain using his flashlight as a guide.

After they had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile and were beginning to wonder whether the passage was interminable, they suddenly came into a large room walled in on all sides with stone, on which were painted scenes of Egyptian life.

The captain flashed his light around the room and a cry of consternation came from the lips of all.

The scene revealed was one of the wildest confusion. Lids had been torn from coffins and lay splintered upon the floor. Mummy wrappings were tossed here and there, helter skelter. On the floor over in one corner, lay

a mummy, with the head torn from the shoulders and lying several feet away from the body.

The old Egyptian threw up his hands.

"Too late! Too late!" he moaned, and tore his hair. "The tomb has been rifled!"

CHAPTER XVIII

A Night of Horror

Zeta Phalos' companions fully shared his feelings, though they repressed them more than their emotional Oriental comrade.

"All for nothing! All for nothing!" moaned Phalos. "After all these years and all this effort, to find the tomb of Ras-Ameses too late!"

A sense of futility and depression, too great for words, gripped the hearts of all the men.

But from this first despondency a thought came to the professor that made him start up with renewed animation.

"Let me have that flashlight, will you, Frank, for a minute?" he asked.

The captain relinquished it, and the professor picked up a piece of the broken coffin lid and examined it with care. Then he gathered up the other pieces and laid them together as they had been originally.

A moment of critical study and he straightened up with a laugh. His companions looked at him with amazement.

"Glad you can see something to laugh about," said the captain grimly.

"Why shouldn't I laugh?" was the reply. "Here we've had all our grief for nothing. This isn't the coffin and that isn't the mummy of Ras-Ameses."

"Are you sure?" asked the captain, while Phalos ceased his moaning and hurried to his side.

"Certain!" was the reply. "Look at the symbols on this cover. Do you see the vulture? Do you see the sacred cobra? Do you see the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt? Of course you don't. None of them is there. Yet they would be there if this were the coffin of the royal Ras-Ameses. This is the coffin of one of his relatives—see, here is his name, Horum-Aleb. Perhaps a nephew or a son-in-law."

A cry of vast relief broke from the lips of Phalos when he perceived that the professor was right in his conclusions.

"You are right," he said. "I jumped too soon at conclusions. I should have remembered that large numbers of the royal family were buried in close proximity to the Pharaoh himself."

His relief, however, though great, was not of long duration, and his brow clouded as another thought occurred to him.

"But if men have broken in here and despoiled this tomb, is it likely that they would

stop here?" he asked. "Would they not persist until they found the vastly more valuable one of the king himself?"

"That, of course, is possible," conceded the professor. "But we'll not assume that until we know it. Besides, everything here shows that they acted with the wildest haste. They may have been alarmed and made off with their booty without going any farther."

"There's one other angle to this matter," put in the captain. "Whoever rifled this tomb had some other way of getting into it and getting out of it than by the way we came in. We know that they didn't use that, or the stone would have been down when we got to it. And if there is another entrance or exit, we have our chance of finding it."

"Is there anything in the inscription bearing on this tomb of Horum-Aleb?" asked the professor.

"Not by name," replied Phalos. "I have pored over the manuscript so often that I know it by heart, and that name does not occur in it. But the diagram that I have worked out from the veiled descriptions of the whole group of tombs gives an estimate of their length and width that may be of help to us in this instance."

"Will you lend us your flashlight again, Frank, while we look it up?" asked the professor.

Somewhat to his surprise, the captain hesitated.

"We've got to be exceedingly careful of this flashlight," he observed. "I have only one extra battery with me, and if we have to stay here long our lives may depend upon our having light enough to see our way about. But I have plenty of matches, and we'll use torches and small fires as far as possible."

"You always think of everything, Frank," was the tribute the professor paid him. "Very well, then, we'll use one of these splintered pieces of coffin lid as a torch."

He lighted one end of the resinous wood, which burned with a bright though flickering light.

"While we're looking this over, Frank," the professor suggested, "suppose you take the measurements of this room with your tape."

The captain complied, and found that the mortuary chamber was thirty-three feet long by twenty-two wide.

He announced the result, and an expression of gratification came from the lips of the savants.

"Those figures apply to a tomb only the third removed from that of Ras-Ameses, as far as we can make out," said Phalos. "We can't be very far from the royal tomb itself."

"Do you remember, Frank," asked the professor, "how many such measurements were

found in the memoranda of Richard's that we examined at Hillville? That shows that he wasn't following a blind trail, but had something definite to go upon. It's another proof that it was he who secured the other copy of the inscription."

"I guess you're right," agreed the captain.

They went forward, and found themselves before long in a bewildering maze of passages that branched off from one another in all directions. Some led up to walls that might or might not have rooms on the other side. Others terminated in what were veritable points, and had evidently been designed to mislead and weary any intruder into the tombs.

"You have to hand it to those old engineers and architects," grumbled the captain, in unwilling admiration. "In cunning and foxiness they'd make some of our modern ones look like thirty cents."

The demands of hunger now began to make themselves felt, and the professor suggested that they snatch a hasty meal. The others willingly acquiesced.

"Napoleon used to say that an army, like a snake, traveled on its stomach," remarked the professor. "Which is one way of saying that a hungry man is no good for fighting. And we have a fight on our hands, if any one ever had."

They made their way back to the mortuary

chamber of Horum-Aleb. Once there, they took from the bag of provisions a limited amount of their precious stores. They ate sparingly, but the meal was made more palatable by coffee that Ismillah had brewed that morning and placed in a thermos bottle.

Never before had any of them partaken of a meal in such weird and uncanny surroundings. To save the light, they sat in utter darkness. This had the additional advantage of hiding from them the funereal trappings and the dried-up figure of the headless mummy lying over in the corner.

But they knew it was there. That thing that had once been a man like themselves was there. They could visualize him in the darkness. He was a guest at their meal—a very quiet guest to be sure—but he was there.

Suddenly there rose a wail as of a soul in torment, a dreadful hideous shriek that filled them with horror.

The old Egyptian fell over on his face and groveled on the floor.

"The vengeance of the ancient gods," he cried wildly, "for daring to search for the Tombs of Gold!"

CHAPTER XIX

The Man by the Stream

Crouching down in the central hall, baffled and defeated in their efforts to find a way out into the world beyond the great cave, Don and Teddy sat for a long time in an attitude of strained expectation. No word was spoken, but each knew what the other was waiting for. They were hungry and thirsty, but if that had been all they would have resigned themselves and tried to forget their misery in sleep.

But there was more than that—the dread of the supernatural!

Very frequently the bravest of men does not care to go through a cemetery at night. He may laugh and make light of his fears. He may summon his common sense to his aid. He may tell himself that only fools fear the dead. Yet, however he may fortify himself, some obscure survival of the fear inherited from generations of superstitious ancestors makes him heartily glad when he leaves the dead behind and finds himself once more in the haunts of the living.

Teddy at last broke the silence.

"Do you think it will come to-night?" he asked, looking around him fearfully, as though his eyes could pierce the darkness.

"I guess not, Brick," answered Don encouragingly. "I don't think—"

Just then it came!

Again a weird, blood-chilling shriek rang down the passage, repeating itself in a thousand echoes, and again before the terrified gaze of the boys that frightful figure upreared itself and seemed to advance toward them with waving arms and threatening gestures.

Another long-drawn shriek and the apparition disappeared, seeming to melt at once into nothingness.

The boys clung close together, their hearts beating like triphammers, their minds dazed. Only gradually did they relax, and for a long time they trembled like leaves.

"I—I tell you it *is* a ghost," said Teddy, at last, tried beyond endurance.

"And I tell you it isn't," retorted Don, who, however, was shaken almost as much as his comrade.

"It is, it is!" reiterated Teddy, covering his face with his hands, as though thus he could shut out the memory of the hideous apparition.

"Oh, if I only had my rifle," groaned Don, to whom the mere feel of that trusty weapon would have brought strength and comfort.

"It wouldn't have done you any good if you had had it," replied Teddy. "You'd have to have a silver bullet in it to kill a ghost."

Don could not help laughing, and it was amazing how that laugh helped to break the tension.

"Well, you do," repeated Teddy defensively. "And it has to be blessed by a bishop, too."

"There isn't any silver bullet handy or a bishop either," said Don. "Anyway, lead and steel are good enough for me.

"Now look here, Brick," he went on. "We've got to pull ourselves together and put all that nonsense about ghosts out of mind. We know when we think it over that there isn't any such thing."

"But we've got to believe our eyes," insisted Teddy. "We saw it, didn't we?"

"We saw something. But what it was, we don't know. But I'm going to try to find out," and Don rose to his feet with an air of decision.

"Where are you going?" asked Teddy.

"Down that passage," answered Don, pointing in the direction of the apparition.

"Oh, don't!" urged Teddy, laying his hand on his arm.

"I'm going," reiterated Don. Come along."

Teddy had the alternative of accompanying his comrade or staying behind, and he chose the former. He had never yet deserted Don

in a crisis, and he was not going to do it now.

The boys advanced slowly in the pitch darkness, feeling their way inch by inch. And that caution was justified when Don, putting out his foot tentatively, felt nothing beneath it and hurriedly drew back.

"Back, Teddy!" he warned. "There's a break here."

He knelt down and reached his hand over into the opening as far down as he could, without coming in contact with anything.

"I wonder how deep it is," he pondered. "Oh, if we only had a light of some kind."

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket and found an old one belonging to the house at Hillville which he could dispense with.

"I'll throw this in," he said, "and we can tell from the sound when it strikes how deep the hole is."

He dropped the key and they listened. The seconds passed. Then far, far down, they heard a faint tinkling, as the key struck a rock.

They recoiled from the brink in consternation.

"Why, it's almost bottomless!" exclaimed Teddy. "It must be hundreds and hundreds of feet deep!"

"Right you are, Brick," agreed Don soberly. "If we'd fallen in there, there wouldn't have been anything left but a grease spot. We can't go any further, and we might as well go back."

"That must be where the g—the creature lives," observed Teddy, as they again reached the large room.

"I'm glad you didn't say 'ghost' that time," laughed Don. "Yes, that's the spot it seemed to come from."

The mere fact that they had tried to "take the bull by the horns," as Teddy put it, was in itself a bracing element, and they had less trouble in getting to sleep than they had had the night before.

But the morning brought with it the grim fact that they were face to face with actual starvation. Their last morsel of food and last drop of water, miserably insufficient as they were, disappeared. They were suffering intensely, and each was shocked as he looked at the sunken cheeks and hollow eyes of the other.

Their thirst, especially, was overpowering. The tightening of their belts helped in some degree to make them forget their hunger, but no such resource could abate their thirst.

They were tormented with visions of sparkling springs and flowing rivers. Their thoughts went back to that night on the balcony of Phalos's villa when they heard the tinkling of the fountains in the courtyard and watched the ripples on the surface of the Nile. There, was water in plenty. What would they not have given now for a single drop to moisten their cracked lips and swollen tongues!

"We've just got to find our way out to-day, old boy," said Don in desperation. "Another day or two and we'll be too weak to do anything but lie here and die."

They started out, summoning all their energy and examining every room and every passage that seemed to offer the slightest chance of an exit. But the morning dragged away without result, and with every hour they grew more feverish and weak.

About noon, as nearly as they could guess from the light, Don's eyes lighted on a stone that seemed to have fallen slightly away from its fellows in the corner of a passage. He grasped it, and it gave slightly under his hand.

He shouted to Teddy, and together they pulled and hauled sufficiently to make an opening through which they could pull themselves. They were panting and exhausted when they drew themselves up and looked about them.

They found themselves in what seemed to have been a receiving vault of the long ago. There were three broad shelves, on which were resting sarcophagi that seemed to have been placed there temporarily, awaiting perhaps a more ceremonious burial later.

Don gave a shout, as his eyes rested on them.

"Gold!" he exclaimed, looking from the lids of the coffins to the slender pillars that adorned the structure. "Gold! Look at them, Brick! As bright and untarnished as the day they were

placed here. Brick, old boy, we've come across a treasure!"

For a time the lads were filled with a wild elation, and they moved rapidly from one object to another, handling, examining, tracing the curious inscriptions.

Then the stark reality of their situation came back to them. What good was their wonderful discovery, after all? What could it do for them?

Here they had happened on wealth that would buy them the most sumptuous banquets that the world could provide. It gave them everything—and nothing.

"Starving to death with all this gold about us!" muttered Teddy bitterly. "I'd give it all for a cup of water."

"The poorest beggar with his crust on the steps of a mosque is better off than we are," agreed Don moodily.

He bowed his head in his hands. Then suddenly he raised it again. What was that he heard?

He listened intently, and hope shot into his eyes. But he had heard of the fancies of the victims of thirst and he was afraid. Was he growing delirious?

"Brick," he said huskily to his friend, who sat hunched up in a corner. "Listen, and tell me if you hear anything."

Inspired by the new tone in Don's voice, Brick sat up.

"It—it sounds like falling water!" he exclaimed, in an awed voice. "Oh, Don, are we going crazy?"

"Come," cried Don, staggering with weakness, but hurrying as fast as he could in the direction of the sound.

At a sudden turn in a passage the sound grew louder, and an instant later their eyes fell on a small stream of water, dashing over a rocky bed.

With a wild cry of delight, the boys threw themselves on the brink of the stream and plunged their heads into the cooling water. Then they drank avidly until Don, remembering caution, pulled Teddy back with main force.

"Easy, old boy," he laughed happily. "Take your time. You'll get into trouble if you drink too much after being without it so long. The stream isn't going to run away."

The soundness of this appealed to Teddy, and he refrained for a time. But again and again they plunged their heads into the water, each time feeling new life thrill through every vein.

At last Don sprang up and threw off his coat.

"I'm going in all over," he cried. "And,

oh, what a bath this is going to be! Come along, Brick, and see who'll be in—"

He stopped as though transfixed.

On the other side of the stream sat a man, looking at him curiously.

A wild cry burst from Don's lips.

"Father!" he cried. "Father!"

CHAPTER XX

A Joyful Reunion

Don plunged into the stream, which was only a couple of feet deep, and waded over to the other side, uttering incoherent exclamations of wonder and delight.

The man watched his coming with a dawning look of recognition in his eyes. He brushed his hand over his face, as though to clear his mind of some bewilderment. He was standing when Don got to him.

Don threw his arms about him and hugged him convulsively.

"Father! Father!" he reiterated again and again, holding the man tightly as though he feared he would vanish. "I've found you at last! Oh, I've found you at last!"

Mr. Sturdy returned his son's embrace, at first in a perfunctory way. Then, suddenly, as though the floodgates of memory had been opened, his clasp tightened. All the hunger of his heart, long separated from his boy, found expression in his voice.

"Don, my dear boy! Don, how glad I am to see you again!"

They remained a long time embraced, uttering words of endearment, and then Don, his face wet with happy tears, released his hold and stepped back, in order that he might see the dear face for which he had searched over a large part of the world.

It was a fine face, cleanly chiseled, with splendid forehead and dark, piercing, but kindly, eyes. The form was like that of his brother Frank's, tall, sinewy and powerful. His complexion was as bronzed as that of an Indian from his work as an explorer under many suns. But the black hair that Don remembered was now heavily streaked with silver.

"But how comes it that you are in Brazil, my dear boy?" asked his father. "I thought you were at home in Hillville. I was counting on seeing you again as soon as Mr. Clifton had his yacht ready to sail."

From the first mention of Brazil, Don had been thinking rapidly. It was evident that the happy shock of seeing Don had in some way swept away the knowledge of this present Egyptian adventure and carried his father back again to Mr. Clifton's plantation.

Don knew little of mental science, but he knew instinctively that any revelation he might make to his father of the real condition of things must be made gradually and tactfully.

"Oh, I got impatient to see you," he said,

with perfect truth. "And as Uncle Frank and Uncle Amos were coming to Brazil on a hunting expedition, I got them to bring me along."

"Fine!" declared his father. "Your mother will be as delighted as I am to see you sooner than she expected. But perhaps you have seen her already?"

"Oh, yes, I've seen her," replied Don, who found himself getting into deep waters.

He looked up and saw Teddy near by, and welcomed him as a diversion.

"This is my friend, Teddy Allison, Father," Don introduced him.

"Any friend of Don's is a friend of mine," said Mr. Sturdy genially, as he took Teddy's extended hand. "What do you think of Brazil, as far as you've seen it?"

Poor Teddy, who had never laid eyes on Brazil, was nonplused. Don came quickly to his relief.

"He thinks it's a mighty fine country; don't you, Teddy?" he said brightly.

"Yes, indeed," answered Teddy, clutching gratefully at the cue thrown to him. "A very wonderful country."

"You'll enjoy looking over Mr. Clifton's plantation," went on Mr. Sturdy. "I'll show you around it if you like. It's a remarkable place."

To ease the situation, Don urged his father to tell them about the wreck of the *Mercury*,

and Mr. Sturdy did so. But there were certain breaks and pauses in the narration, as though the story teller were trying to reconcile certain things that bewildered him.

Don's mind was in a storm of conflicting emotions. The dominant feeling was one of intense delight. His father at last was restored to him. But his heart was torn with grief at his father's distraught condition and with perplexity as to how, if at all, he could bring him to a clear conception of things as they were.

"Guess perhaps we'd better go in and get dinner," said Mr. Sturdy genially. "Are you hungry?"

Don and Teddy looked at each other. Were they hungry?

"Though now I think of it I have some provisions here," went on Mr. Sturdy, and their hearts leaped. "The servants must have put up a lunch for me when I came out into this grotto, though I don't remember bringing it. Why they wanted to put up so much I can't imagine," he continued, as he went to a little distance and returned with a big bag of food of various kinds. "But here it is. Help yourselves."

The boys dived into the bag, and brought out bread and meat and canned supplies, which Don rightly conjectured were part of the equip-

ment with which his father had started on this strange expedition.

It was like manna from the skies, and the poor starved boys had all they could do to refrain from gorging it like wolves. But they knew that in their condition this might prove fatal, and besides they had to conserve the contents of the bag.

So with a mighty effort they restrained themselves and ate but sparingly, with new life flowing through their veins and new hope springing in their hearts.

What marvelous changes an hour had wrought! Many problems remained yet to be solved, but they faced them with high hearts and renewed courage. They felt equal to any fate.

While they ate, Mr. Sturdy had been watching Don with deep affection in his eyes. But his bewilderment persisted. Again and again he rubbed his forehead in perplexity.

"Do you know," he said, when they had finished, "there's something queer about this grotto? It looks more like Egypt than Brazil."

Don thought the time had come to hazard a bold stroke.

"It is Egypt," he said quietly.

CHAPTER XXI

In the Labyrinth

All the culture and self-restraint acquired in years was stripped from Zeta Phalos for the moment, even his religion dropped away, and the superstition of his ancestors took possession of him, as he lay moaning and beating his head on the floor of the cave in the hope of propitiating the angry gods of his remote forebears who were making those weird, ghost-like noises.

It would have been idle for the captain and Professor Bruce to have denied that they were terribly frightened. They were brave men who had often faced death unflinchingly. But just now cold, stark terror had a grip on their souls.

Again that awful scream rang through the vaulted halls, and this time after one mighty paroxysm of fear, the Egyptian lay still. He had fainted.

The necessity of doing something to help him broke the spell that had fastened on his companions, and they sprang to his relief. They chafed his hands and wrists. After a long time he opened his eyes, only to close them

again with a cry, as he remembered his experience.

"The gods! The gods of my forebears!" he moaned. "They would not be defied. They are punishing us for our presumption."

"Come, now! Come!" urged the captain, not unkindly, his own self-possession having been restored to him by the necessity of action. "Pull yourself together. After all, a sound doesn't kill anybody."

It was a long time, however, before the old Egyptian regained his composure. He maintained a listening attitude, and at intervals kept casting uneasy glances toward the unseen body with the severed head that lay there so quietly, but, as he thought, so menacingly, in the darkness.

The professor rightly interpreted his thought.

"It won't do any harm to remove the mummy to some other place, Frank," he suggested quietly to his brother. "They used to pass them around at Egyptian banquets to remind the diners of the brevity of life. But to my mind they're not very cheerful adjuncts of a feast."

The captain agreed, and together he and Professor Bruce took the mummy into a distant passage and laid the poor relic of humanity down reverently.

The act itself and the fearlessness with

which his companions went about their distasteful work helped Phalos markedly to resume his usual philosophical attitude.

"Old traditions were too strong for me," he murmured apologetically. "Then, too, my years are telling on me and we've been under an unusual strain to-day."

"I can well understand how you feel," replied the professor with a genial smile. "And I don't mind admitting that I too was unnerved. What do you think it was, Frank?" he asked, turning to his brother.

"Can't say," replied the captain. "Of course, we'll cut out right now any suggestion of the supernatural. That yell had either a human or a mechanical origin. It may have been some freak due to natural causes and the configuration of these catacombs. Or it may have been a trick to frighten us away on the part of some one who doesn't dare meet us in the open. As it stands, one guess is as good as another."

"If only it doesn't come again!" ejaculated Phalos fervently.

"Let's hope it won't," returned the captain. He smiled grimly and added: "I know when I've had enough. But if it does, it won't be so startling as the first time, for now we're prepared for it. But now that we've had our supper, what do you say to starting on again?"

All agreed to this, but when Phalos tried to

walk he found that his trembling limbs would hardly support him.

There was no help for it, and they had to defer their attempt until the morning. They composed themselves to sleep as best they could, though the captain, who always slept with one eye open, kept his rifle close at hand so that he could clutch it instantly in case of need.

Nothing occurred through the night to disturb them, however; and as the old Egyptian woke refreshed and much stronger, they resumed their search after they had partaken of a scanty meal and finished the rest of Ismillah's coffee.

They wandered about, examining every passage that seemed to promise results, only to have their souls made sick by hope deferred. As far as they could, they endeavored to keep within a small radius of the despoiled tomb, for the diagram of Phalos had made it probable that the royal tomb of Ras-Ameses was somewhere in its vicinity.

The entire day passed without success, and it was a disgruntled trio that, when night came, sought once more the room in which they had passed the night before.

Their provisions were dwindling, and their forced abstinence was already compelling them to feel the pangs of hunger and thirst.

"Glad the boys are not in here with us," re-

marked the captain. "With their young healthy appetites they'd feel this a mighty sight worse than we do. At least they'll have plenty of provisions in the camp with Ismillah and Abdul."

"I've been worrying about them all day," said the professor, his brow creased with anxiety. "There hasn't been a moment when they were absent from my thoughts."

"Same here," admitted the captain. "Though both the boys are better able to take care of themselves than any other I've ever seen."

That night the awful shriek came again, rising in hideous crescendo and dying away in moans that chilled the blood. Fear once more laid its icy hand on their hearts, but this time they were prepared for it and inwardly defied it, even Phalos controlling, outwardly at least, his terror.

About noon the next day an exclamation from Professor Bruce brought the other two hurrying to his side.

They found him standing before a perfectly square stone construction measuring exactly thirty-six feet on every side. It was of polished granite, with the blocks fitted into each other so perfectly that the seams were scarcely visible.

With trembling fingers, the professor and Phalos consulted the manuscript and compared

it with the symbols that were carved on the nearer side. A shout of triumph burst simultaneously from their lips.

"Eureka!" shouted the professor. "We have found it! The tomb of Ras-Ameses!"

"The greatest of the Tombs of Gold!" cried Phalos exultantly.

CHAPTER XXII

A Bewildering Experience

When Don declared that they were in Egypt, Mr. Sturdy looked at his son as if he doubted his sanity.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "Are you fooling?"

"Listen, Father dear," said Don, with an inward prayer for guidance. "You've been ill for a while, very ill, and during that illness you were brought to Egypt. Mother came with you, so that it was all right. And before I say anything else, let me tell you that mother and Ruth are well and happy—that is, they will be perfectly happy when you are with them once again. Won't that be great, Father, all of us together again in the dear old home at Hillville?"

"But—what—but—" stammered Don's father, trying to assimilate the new and to some extent terrifying ideas that came crowding in upon him. "Do you mean to say that I have been unconscious all this time?"

"Not unconscious, Father," replied Don.

"But—but in a kind of daze, as it were. And when you got to Egypt you wanted to go on with the work you had been doing before the war—you know, excavating in the Valley of the Kings."

"The Valley of the Kings!" exclaimed Mr. Sturdy. "Yes, I remember that I did a good deal of work there in the old days. I was looking, I remember, for a special tomb—that of Ras-Ameses. Of course," he added hurriedly, "I want you to keep that a secret between you and me. Don't mention that name to anybody. Some day I hope to go looking for it again."

"You have been looking for it, Father," said Don gently. "While your mind was in a daze, you know. And I believe you've found it. I believe you're in it now."

There was such a look of utter bewilderment on his father's face that Don's heart ached.

"But don't try to get the rights of it just now," went on Don, rising. "There'll be plenty of time for that. The only thing that counts is that I've got you again. Come and look at what Teddy and I found this morning," he said. "Come along, Teddy," he added. "And suppose you bring that bag of provisions along with you."

"Will I?" returned Teddy. "Just watch me! I'll cling to it like the ivy to the oak."

As Don, with his heart beating high, walked along beside his father, he was delighted to

note the springiness of step and vigor of movement that testified to his parent's superb physical condition. That, he knew, would be one of the most important factors in restoring him to mental health.

There was the enthusiasm of the skilled Egyptologist in the exclamations with which Mr. Sturdy viewed the wonders that the boys had discovered that morning. His delight was unbounded, and he confirmed without question the boys' estimate of the wealth of their discovery.

But all the time the battle was going on between the dual personality—the Sturdy of Brazil and the Sturdy of Egypt. It was pitiful, and yet at the same time encouraging, to note the way that trained intelligence of his was trying to reconcile the two and bring order out of chaos.

"Now, Father," said Don, after a while, "suppose you come to the place where Teddy and I have been roosting while we've been here, and lie down and rest. That will give you a chance to think this thing out and get your bearings. Oh, how happy I am to have you with me again!" he added, giving him an affectionate hug.

Mr. Sturdy welcomed the suggestion. What he wanted more than anything else was an uninterrupted opportunity to think. Already he was piecing things together, and under the

severe stimulus his mental condition was mending.

All that long afternoon Don's father lay awake, stretched out on his back, trying to adjust himself to actual conditions. And it was not until the dusk was gathering that Don called him to the simple supper that he and Teddy had quietly prepared.

"I ought to tell you, Father," said Don, dwelling lovingly on the name that he had so often longed to speak, "that we've had an unusual and rather shivery experience each night since we've been here," and he went on to tell of the apparition.

Mr. Sturdy listened with interest.

"I don't wonder you were frightened," he said. "It was enough to terrify any one. I'm glad you told me about it. Forewarned is forearmed. It won't be pleasant to see or listen to, but it's very different from having it take you unawares."

But even though prepared, they were all chilled to the marrow when, an hour later, that frightful shriek was heard and they saw the sheeted figure advancing toward them.

Even as they shrank back before the menacing monster, a shot rang out, and the apparition wavered for a moment and disappeared.

The three of them sprang to their feet in wild amazement.

"Who fired that shot?" cried Don. "Did you, Father?"

"No," replied his father. "I have no rifle. I thought it was you."

"I haven't any either," replied Don. "Uncle Frank! Uncle Frank!" he shouted, in uncontrollable excitement.

There was a shout of surprise from a passage near at hand, and the next moment the captain, with a flashlight in his hand, followed by the professor and Phalos, came rushing up and threw his arms about Don.

"My dear, dear boy!" he exclaimed, with his voice husky with emotion.

"But see, Uncle Frank! Uncle Amos!" cried Don. "Here's father! Don't you recognize him? I've found my father!"

The scene that took place for the next few minutes beggared description. There were sounds of delight, grasps of the hand, slaps on the back, incoherent questions tumbling over one another. Hardly any one knew what he was doing or saying, but all knew that they were supremely, overwhelmingly happy.

"We've found you, Dick, old man: we've found you!" jubilated the captain. "And, oh, the luck of it! We've found you in the Tombs of Gold!"

CHAPTER XXIII

Riches beyond Price

It was a long time before the members of the party could settle down to a narration of their respective adventures. A torch was secured from the débris in the room of Horum-Aleb, and by its light they sat in a group, so that they could see each other's features as they talked.

"How lucky it was that you decided to take a shot at the ghost—or whatever it is," remarked Don. "If it hadn't been for that, we might never have got together."

"I suppose the chief reason I shot at it, was to relieve my feelings," answered the captain, with a grin. "If it were anything human, it deserved to be shot. If it were anything mechanical, I thought I might disable the mechanism. We hadn't seen the thing before tonight, but we'd heard it, and I had judged just about where we'd find it, and my guess was good. I'll take a look around in the morning."

Don had snatched an opportunity to reveal to his uncles what he had already told his

father, and they acted with great tact and judgment in evading risky subjects and yet including him in their expedition, as if he knew all about it.

The elders listened avidly, too, to the boys' narration of what had happened since they had been separated, and also to their story of the gold objects they had found that morning.

"Those alone would richly repay us for our trip," observed the professor exultantly, while the face of Phalos flushed with pleasure. "If now we can add to them the things undoubtedly in the tomb of Ras-Ameses—"

"Ras-Ameses!" exclaimed Don. "Do you mean to say that you have found it?"

"Practically sure of it," asserted the captain. "That's all the good it does us though, for the present," he added, his face falling. "It's so solidly built it would take a charge of dynamite to blow it open."

"No door or opening of any kind?" queried Don.

"Nothing that we've been able to discover so far," was the reply. "But we're going at it again in the morning."

In the jubilation in which they all shared, they put aside for the moment the fact that they were prisoners, doomed to perish inevitably of hunger unless they could find an exit, for which all had hitherto searched in vain. But every little while that grim terror slipped

into their thoughts, like a specter at a feast.

They talked until late into the night, and they were delighted to note the rapidity with which Don's father was beginning to adjust himself to conditions. Yet, every so often, there would be moments of confusion that were baffling and saddening.

The next morning after a hasty breakfast, in which Mr. Sturdy's stores played the greater part, all went to the supposed mausoleum of Ras-Ameses. They examined every inch of it with the greatest care, but found not the slightest clue to an entrance.

"Suppose you hoist me up to the top," suggested Don.

They made a back for him, and he swung himself up. The top was flat, and made of the same massive blocks as the sides. Nothing rewarded his search.

His announcement to that effect was received with glum silence. It removed their last hope. They were thoroughly dispirited and disheartened.

As Don rested on the edge, he noticed a fretwork running along the top, the only ornament that relieved the severity of the tomb. He ran his hand along the edge, slowly, carefully, pressing in turn every projection.

Then a thrill ran through his veins. One of them had yielded, ever so slightly, but it had yielded!

He pressed upon it with all his might. And there, before the gazing spectators, who stood spellbound with amazement, one of the great blocks about four feet from the ground swung silently inward, revealing an aperture about three feet in width and height.

With an excited shout, the professor went through the opening, followed one by one by the others, and they found themselves in the tomb of one of the mightiest of the Pharaohs, on which no eyes had looked since it had been sealed thousands of years before.

Untold riches dazzled their eyes, as they looked about them. Gold, gold, gold everywhere, in columns and tablets and coffin lids and statues, in beds and chariots and boats and amulets, in chairs and maces and scepters and symbols, gold in a profusion that stunned them and took away their breath. And besides this immeasurable wealth, there were other things quite as priceless, rings, robes, cups, whips, vases, inlaid and encrusted with precious stones. And on a great golden slab lay the sarcophagus of the mighty monarch who once possessed all these treasures and had ordered them to be brought to his tomb as emblems of his boundless wealth.

Hours passed like minutes while the excited group passed from one object to another, hardly daring to believe their good fortune, and half fearing that they would wake and find

it all a dream. They had expected much, but this surpassed all their expectations.

It was only weariness that reminded them that they had spent the whole day in rejoicing over their wonderful discovery and suggested the need of food and rest.

"We owe it all to you, Don," said the professor, as the excited and happy group made their way back to the rendezvous. "If you hadn't found that spring—"

"Just a bit of luck," disclaimed Don modestly.

"Was it just luck?" asked the captain pointedly.

"Well, not exactly," admitted Don. "The fact is, I remembered the way King Cheops concealed the opening into his tomb in the Great Pyramid. I thought the same thing might have been worked here, so I tried to feel for it. But it was just luck I thought of it."

"Luck!" snorted the captain. "I call it brain. And about the finest specimen of brain I know of is in the headpiece of a certain young fellow named Don Sturdy!"

CHAPTER XXIV

The Sleepwalker

Naturally, there was one subject above all others discussed that night as the explorers ate their meal and later, when they lay about and relaxed from the strain of the day.

But even more important than that was one that the captain had with Don's father, as he drew the latter a little apart from the group later in the evening.

"How are things shaping, Richard?" asked the captain, laying his hand on his brother's arm with an affectionate gesture.

"I think I'm beginning to get matters in their true relations," replied Mr. Sturdy. "The discovery to-day has done a lot toward clearing things up. I don't recall a thing as yet about my voyage from Brazil to Egypt. But I am beginning to remember some of the things that have occurred since my reaching here. I can dimly recall the faces of some of the workmen I employed. It's still rather dreamlike, but it's coming."

"That's great!" exclaimed the captain. "It

won't be long at this rate before the last haziness will have vanished. But there is one thing especially that I wish you would try to remember. It's a thing on which the lives of all of us may depend. How did you get in here?"

Richard Sturdy closed his eyes and tried to remember. But after a prolonged effort, he opened his eyes and shook his head wearily.

"I can't do it, Frank," he said. "The sudden blending of the recollections of Brazil with those of Egypt has left me confused on some points. I don't yet remember anything of what passed just before I found myself on the bank of the stream."

"Let me see if I can help you," said his brother. "You heard Don describe the way he got in, or rather fell into, this place. Did you come in that way?"

Richard Sturdy shook his head.

"I'm sure I didn't," he answered. "I'd probably have some scratches and bruises to show for it just as the boys have."

"Don't you recall the one rock balanced on the other where we came in?" persisted the captain.

"All Greek to me," was the reply.

"I see," said the captain. "Now, Richard," he went on solemnly, "the lives of all of us are in your hands. Somewhere, somehow, you found an entrance into this place. We've searched for it in vain. Our provisions will

last for only a short time longer. When they are gone we shall starve. Try, Richard, try to remember. Concentrate your mind on it. Make a supreme effort."

"I will," promised Richard Sturdy, deeply moved. "Oh, if my mind were what it used to be! But I will make a desperate effort."

"Good!" encouraged the captain. "In the meantime we'll call it a day and settle down to sleep, so that you can think undisturbed."

A quiet word to the others and the talk subsided, and they stretched out in slumber.

But Richard Sturdy lay awake far into the night cudgeling his brain in vain, and it was only toward morning that he fell exhausted into a deep sleep.

Just as the first faint streaks of dawn stole into the chamber Don was awakened by the captain's hand on his arm and the captain's other hand on his lips.

"S—sh!" whispered his uncle, as Don sat up in surprise.

Don followed the direction of his uncle's eyes, and saw that his father had risen, and was standing in a somewhat strained and unnatural attitude.

Richard Sturdy stood for a moment and turned his face first to the right and then to the left. Don caught a glimpse of his eyes, and saw that they had an expressionless appear-

ance, almost as though they were made of glass.

Then his father started off with the stiff step of a soldier on parade, down one of the passages that led off to the right. In an instant the captain and Don were on their feet and following him on tiptoe.

On Richard Sturdy went, until Don could hear the faint falling of the water that had been such a blessed boon to him the morning before.

His father followed the bank of the stream until he came to a place where the little river seemed to lose itself through a narrow passage into a small mound of earth.

Without a moment's hesitation, Mr. Sturdy stepped into the stream, bent down until his back was in almost a horizontal position, and disappeared under the mound.

Don and the captain followed his example. Their faces almost touched the water as they bent down, but there was still room for them to breathe.

A moment later, they emerged into an apartment of about twenty feet in length and width. At one side it sloped gently upward.

Richard Sturdy climbed the slope, bent over and pushed away a heavy growth of bushes, and a rush of light and fresh morning air swept in from the outside world.

Don leaped into the air and was about to

give utterance to a delighted whoop, but the captain clapped his hand over his mouth.

"Not a sound," he whispered. "We mustn't wake him."

So Don, though in his glee he fairly ached to shout and dance, was forced to restrain himself.

Richard Sturdy stood for a moment looking outside. Then, with the same stiff, soldierly stride, he passed the silent watchers, retraced his steps, and sank down in his former place with a deep drawn sigh.

Then and only then did the captain and Don dare to give vent to their delight. They shook hands vigorously, their faces beaming. Then they wakened the others, and after cautioning them about disturbing Mr. Sturdy, imparted the joyous news that threw them all into a delirium of rapture.

It was late when Don's father awoke.

"No use, Frank," he said sadly, as his eyes encountered those of the captain. "I've tried and tried, but I can't think of the way I got in here."

The captain took his hand.

"You've already shown us, Richard," he said gently. "You thought about it so intently last night that it came to you in your sleep and you led us to it. We are saved, Richard, and you are our savior."

Then he narrated briefly and simply the

events of the night. Mr. Sturdy was overwhelmed, though in his joy there was a tincture of embarrassment.

Apart altogether from the value of his service, unconscious as it was, the fact that he had saved the party was of immense benefit in helping Don's father to recover his mental balance. Knowing dimly his infirmity, he had had a sense of dependence, of uselessness, of inferiority, and had felt that he was more or less of a burden on the others. He feared to look into the future. But the service he had done them removed this feeling altogether, and from that time on his progress was rapid.

They could now eat freely, not only of Mr. Sturdy's provisions, but Don and Teddy served for communication with Ismillah and Abdul, bringing in supplies daily, though taking the utmost precautions to see that they were not followed.

They were uneasy at learning, however, that though the servants had not been molested in their hidden retreat, they had frequently seen a band of Bedouins ranging the vicinity, headed by Tezra and Nepahak, both of whom were known to Ismillah.

Don had recovered his own rifle, and on reporting the facts gained from Ismillah, had been directed by the captain to bring plenty of ammunition from their store and enough rifles to equip every member of the party.

Nearly a week was required for the professor and Zeta Phalos, with the assistance of the others, to catalogue the treasures of the tomb for submission to the Egyptian Government. A great many of the most portable of these were packed to carry along with them, as proofs of their discovery.

On the night before they planned to leave, they were engaged in an earnest conversation about their future movements when once again the horrible shriek brought them to their feet and the dreadful figure, more frightful, it seemed to them, than ever, seemed to move threateningly toward them, its banshee wail arousing a thousand echoes.

The captain reached for his gun and fired, and the figure vanished.

"Come along!" called the captain, as he seized a torch and rushed in that direction. "We'll settle this thing right here and now!"

The others, all except Phalos, followed with torches and flashlights, and found the captain standing on the brink of a chasm.

They looked over fearfully, and then the captain broke into a gale of laughter.

"There's your ghost!" he cried. "Look at him!" and he pointed to a large platform made of reeds and covered with a white sheet on which some phosphorescent substance had been daubed, hanging a little below the brink of the chasm.

"And I winged him too with that shot," the captain chuckled, as he pointed to a broken hinge, the brightly gleaming shattered edge of which showed that the break had been recent. "Come here, Phalos," he shouted, "and look at your ghost."

The old Egyptian, reassured by the laughter, came forward and looked rather sheepishly at the discredited "ghost."

"Simplicity itself," declared the professor, "and yet ingenious too. There's no doubt the thing was designed to frighten off intruders. You see the thing is made of reeds, through which the wind plays, something on the principle of an Æolian harp, only in this case they were so arranged as to produce discords instead of harmonies. When the night wind springs up, there's a tremendous draught comes up this funnel-like chasm, as you can tell by putting your hand over the edge. When an unusually heavy gust comes, it sends this thing up into the air with its phosphorescent sheet and other fixings."

"But it will never fly up again," cried the captain. "I've broken one of its wings. Here goes the other."

His rifle cracked and the remaining hinge snapped. There was a moment's fluttering, and then the whole hideous contraption sank out of sight forever to the bottom of the abyss.

The next morning the explorers bade fare-

well to the Tombs of Golds, and passed out into the open. It took them several hours to get out their precious burdens, and several more to get them packed on the extra camels they had brought along for pack purposes.

They were making their way down the rocks with the last consignment when a squad of rough-looking riders, about a score in number, came in sight from around a stony slope a quarter of a mile away.

"Down!" cried the captain, setting the example.

The others sought to obey, but, encumbered as they were by their burdens, could not do it so quickly as to avoid detection.

That they had been seen was plain from the actions of the riders, who pulled their mounts to a sudden halt, and two or three of whom, who appeared to be the leaders, gathered in excited discussion.

Then, the conference at an end, the newcomers rode on slowly and came to a pause at the foot of the slope where the explorers had chosen their position behind the rocks, not more than two hundred feet away.

In the front, like birds of ill omen, rode Tezra and Nepahak.

CHAPTER XXV

Victory against Odds

Don was sheltered by a rock immediately adjoining the one behind which his Uncle Frank was lying, and he could hear the latter grit his teeth as he caught sight of the two rascals.

"The spawn!" the captain muttered. "I'll have a crack at each of them before the day is over."

Tezra detached himself from the fierce-eyed, hawk-nosed tribesmen that formed his lawless following, and, waving a white cloth, advanced toward the foot of the slope.

"I'd like to shoot it out of his hand," growled the captain.

But an envoy's flag, even when held by a scoundrel, is sacred, and the captain reluctantly rose to his feet.

"Keep him covered," he commanded, and turned toward Tezra.

"What do you want?" he demanded curtly.

"A share of the treasure you have found," replied Tezra.

"I like your impudence," returned the captain. "On what ground?"

"Because we are the stronger," was the cynical avowal. "We are many and you are few."

"And if I refuse?"

"We will come and take it and wipe you out."

"And if I surrender it to you?"

"We will let you go with your lives."

"Now listen to me, you scoundrel," blazed forth the captain. "My answer is 'no'. A thousand times, no! You can't have anything except over our dead bodies."

"You are going to your death," snarled Tezra. "We are twenty to six. You have no chance."

"You and Nepahak will go with us then," retorted the captain. "You have my answer. Come and take us."

The discomfited envoy, with a scowl, returned to his companions, and an animated debate ensued.

Tezra and Nepahak, their red fezzes shining brightly in the sun, could be seen moving here and there, evidently urging a course of action to which some of the others objected.

"I'm going to throw a scare into those fellows," declared the captain. "Don, do you see that tassel at the side of Tezra's fez?"

"Yes," replied Don, getting his rifle ready.

"Clip it," the captain commanded. "I'll

take the button on the fez of Nepahak. Fire when I give the word."

They took careful aim.

"Fire!"

The shots rang out simultaneously. The button was shorn neatly from Nepahak's fez, and the tassel fell from the side of the fez of Tezra as though it had been clipped with shears.

A chorus of shouts went up from the tribesmen and they threw themselves from their mounts, crouching on the further side of the animals for shelter. Tezra and Nepahak, their faces blanched, quickly did the same.

"We could have sent those through your heads just as easily," shouted the captain, "but we do not want your blood on our hands."

That the marvelous shooting had had its effect was evident from the long pause that ensued. Don began to hope that the "bluff" had succeeded.

But the hope of loot had been too long nourished and the disparity in numbers was too great for the robbers to abandon their project so easily. It was unlikely that all of the little forlorn hope of six were equally good marksmen.

Gradually the camels, under the prodding of their hidden masters, began to move slowly toward the base of the slope so as to diminish the distance when the time came to charge. It would have been easy to bring some of the

camels down, but the explorers stayed their hands.

"They're coming now!" exclaimed the captain, as his practiced eye saw that they were gathering for a rush. "Don't show an inch more of yourselves that you can help. Fire to wound but not to kill, on this first rush. A man put out of action counts for as much as a dead one. Fire when I give the order, and then keep on firing."

A score of rifles suddenly appeared above the camels' backs, and a volley of bullets came pattering against the rocks. Then, with a loud shout, the Bedouins abandoned their shelters and rushed forward, firing as they came.

"Fire!" cried the captain.

Six rifles cracked and each missile found a mark. Don had picked out Nepahak, and caught him in the leg. The captain sent a bullet through Tezra's shoulder. Mr. Sturdy brought down the Bedouin chief. The others, at such close range, could hardly miss, and they did not.

The tribesmen wavered as they saw their leaders go down. Another volley wrought havoc in their ranks, and they broke and ran to the shelter of their camels. No bullets pursued them, as the explorers wanted to limit the casualties as much as possible.

"Do you think they will rush us again, Uncle Frank?" asked Don, as he reloaded.

"Not likely; though they may," was the reply. "And they may have reinforcements in the vicinity who will be attracted by the sound of the shooting. Hark! What's that?"

There was the sound of a bugle in the distance, and a few minutes later a squad of Egyptian cavalry galloped up, a smart looking officer riding at their head.

At the first bugle note, the unwounded tribesmen mounted their camels and scurried away as fast as their beasts could carry them.

The young officer swung himself from the saddle and looked about at the wounded men, who gave ample evidence that a skirmish had occurred.

The Americans, accompanied by Phalos, advanced to meet him. A short colloquy followed, and the situation was cleared up satisfactorily. The squad was a Government patrol sent out to subdue lawless bands that had of late been giving much trouble.

"You've done some of our work for us," the officer declared, as he supervised the work of gathering up the bandits. None had been killed, though some of the wounds were painful.

If looks could have killed, the party would certainly have perished beneath the baleful glances cast at them by Tezra and Nepahak, who, shortly afterward, were sentenced to ten years at hard labor.

The offer of the young officer to escort the exploring party to Luxor was accepted, and they reached the city with their precious freight in safety. The dahabiyeh of Phalos conveyed them to Cairo, and there they made their report to the Egyptian Government, which immediately set a guard about the tomb of Ras-Ameses.

The announcement of the discovery to the world created a tremendous sensation, and honors were showered without stint on the discoverers. The usual arrangement was made, whereby a certain share of the treasures went to the Government and the rest was equally divided among the members of the party, making every one of them rich beyond their dreams.

But richer far to Don was his finding of his father, a fact that he cabled at the first possible moment to the wife and daughter waiting in America. The delirious joy that the news brought into the Hillville home was beyond expression. Answering cables came, brimming with happiness and affection, and urging the voyagers to hasten home.

Teddy, too, had got in instant communication with his father, and the answer received removed all apprehension he might have had as to his escapade.

"Guess that spanking has gone into the discard," he grinned, as he read his message.

"Dad seems to think that his wandering boy is the goods, after all."

As Don reviewed the events of those stirring weeks, he felt that he never again would meet with such exciting adventures. But that he was mistaken will be seen in the next book of this series, entitled: "Don Sturdy Across the North Pole; or, Cast Away in the Land of Ice."

Their parting with Phalos was a cause of keen regret to all of them, for they had learned to regard the old Egyptian with the deepest affection. The feeling was reciprocated, and he bade them farewell with the greatest reluctance, after making them promise that they would make his villa their home on any future visit to Egypt.

The voyage home was a swift and prosperous one, and the reception they had when they reached Hillville was one never to be forgotten. It was a red letter day in that household when Mr. Sturdy, almost wholly recovered, gathered his wife and daughter in his arms. Happiness had proved a wonderful tonic, and Mrs. Sturdy was herself again while the roses were once more blooming in Ruth's cheeks.

A skillful surgeon found a way to cure Mr. Sturdy utterly by removing a splinter of skull that had been pressing on the brain, and then indeed the Sturdy home became an earthly paradise.

Don's exploits made him a hero with the

other members of the household, Dan and Mrs. Roscoe and Jennie, whose delight at the return of the adventurers was only less keen than that of Ruth and Mrs. Sturdy. Jennie, especially, threatened to create a scarcity in the gum market, as she vigorously worked her jaws while listening with delicious shivers to the story of his wanderings in the tomb of the monarch, whom she persisted in calling "Ras-Paresis."

Don shone with an added luster also in the eyes of Fred and Emily Turner. But he laughingly evaded the pedestal on which they sought to place him.

"It's dad who deserves all the credit," he said. "I only fell into the Tombs of Gold. It was dad who led us out."

THE END

THE DON STURDY SERIES

By VICTOR APPLETON

Individual Colored Wrappers and Text Illustrations by
WALTER S. ROGERS
Every Volume Complete in Itself

In company with his uncles, one a mighty hunter and the other a noted scientist, Don Sturdy travels far and wide, gaining much useful knowledge and meeting many thrilling adventures.

DON STURDY ON THE DESERT OF MYSTERY;
Or, Autoing in the Land of the Caravans.

An engrossing tale of the Sahara Desert, of encounters with wild animals and crafty Arabs.

DON STURDY WITH THE BIG SNAKE HUNTERS;
Or, Lost in the Jungles of the Amazon.

Don's uncle, the hunter, took an order for some of the biggest snakes to be found in South America—to be delivered alive! The filling of that order brought keen excitement to the boy.

DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD;
Or, The Old Egyptian's Great Secret.

A fascinating tale of exploration and adventure in the Valley of Kings in Egypt. Once the whole party became lost in the maze of cavelike tombs far underground.

DON STURDY ACROSS THE NORTH POLE;
Or, Cast Away in the Land of Ice.

Don and his uncles joined an expedition bound by air across the north pole. A great polar blizzard nearly wrecks the airship.

DON STURDY IN THE LAND OF VOLCANOES;
Or, The Trail of the Ten Thousand Smokes.

An absorbing tale of adventures among the volcanoes of Alaska in a territory but recently explored. A story that will make Don dearer to his readers than ever.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

THE TOM SWIFT SERIES

By VICTOR APPLETON

Uniform Style of Binding. Individual Colored Wrappers. Every Volume Complete in Itself.

Every boy possesses some form of inventive genius. Tom Swift is a bright, ingenious boy and his inventions and adventures make the most interesting kind of reading

TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR CYCLE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRSHIP
TOM SWIFT AND HIS SUBMARINE BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RUNABOUT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIRELESS MESSAGE
TOM SWIFT AMONG THE DIAMOND MAKERS
TOM SWIFT IN THE CAVES OF ICE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS SKY RACER
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RIFLE
TOM SWIFT IN THE CITY OF GOLD
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR GLIDER
TOM SWIFT IN CAPTIVITY
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIZARD CAMERA
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GREAT SEARCHLIGHT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GIANT CANNON
TOM SWIFT AND HIS PHOTO TELEPHONE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AERIAL WARSHIP
TOM SWIFT AND HIS BIG TUNNEL
TOM SWIFT IN THE LAND OF WONDERS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS WAR TANK
TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR SCOUT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS UNDERSEA SEARCH
TOM SWIFT AND AMONG THE FIRE FIGHTERS
TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE
TOM SWIFT AND HIS FLYING BOAT
TOM SWIFT AND HIS GREAT OIL GUSHER

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

THE RADIO BOYS SERIES

(Trademark Registered)

By ALLEN CHAPMAN

Author of the "Railroad Series," Etc.

Individual Colored Wrappers. Illustrated.
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

A new series for boys giving full details of radio work, both in sending and receiving—telling how small and large amateur sets can be made and operated, and how some boys got a lot of fun and adventure out of what they did. Each volume from first to last is so thoroughly fascinating, so strictly up-to-date and accurate, we feel sure all lads will peruse them with great delight.

Each volume has a Foreword by Jack Binns, the well-known radio expert.

THE RADIO BOYS' FIRST WIRELESS;
Or, Winning the Ferberton Prize.

THE RADIO BOYS AT OCEAN POINT;
Or, The Messsage That Saved the Ship.

THE RADIO BOYS AT THE SENDING
Or, Making Good in the Wireless Room. STATION;

THE RADIO BOYS AT MOUNTAIN PASS;
Or, The Midnight Call for Assistance.

THE RADIO BOYS TRAILING A VOICE;
Or, Solving a Wireless Mystery.

THE RADIO BOYS WITH THE FOREST
Or, The Great Fire on Spruce Mountain. RANGERS;

THE RADIO BOYS WITH THE ICEBERG
Or, Making Safe the Ocean Lanes. PATROL;

RADIO BOYS WITH THE FLOOD FIGHTERS;
Or, Saving the City in the Valley.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

THE RAILROAD SERIES

By ALLEN CHAPMAN

Author of the "Radio Boys," Etc.

Uniform Style of Binding. Illustrated.
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

In this line of books there is revealed the whole workings of a great American railroad system. There are adventures in abundance—railroad wrecks, dashes through forest fires, the pursuit of a "wildcat" locomotive, the disappearance of a pay car with a large sum of money on board—but there is much more than this—the intense rivalry among railroads and railroad men, the working out of running schedules, the getting through "on time" in spite of all obstacles, and the manipulation of railroad securities by evil men who wish to rule or ruin.

RALPH OF THE ROUND HOUSE;
Or, Bound to Become a Railroad Man.

RALPH IN THE SWITCH TOWER;
Or, Clearing the Track.

RALPH ON THE ENGINE;
Or, The Young Fireman of the Limited Mail.

RALPH ON THE OVERLAND EXPRESS;
Or, The Trials and Triumphs of a Young Engineer.

RALPH, THE TRAIN DISPATCHER;
Or, the Mystery of the Pay Car.

RALPH ON THE ARMY TRAIN;
Or, The Young Railroader's Most Daring Exploit.

RALPH ON THE MIDNIGHT FLYER;
Or, The Wreck at Shadow Valley.

RALPH AND THE MISSING MAIL POUCH;
Or, The Stolen Government Bonds.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

THE RIDDLE CLUB BOOKS

By ALICE DALE HARDY

Individual Colored Wrappers. Attractively Illustrated.
Every Volume Complete in Itself.

Here is as ingenious a series of books for little folks as has ever appeared since "Alice in Wonderland." The idea of the Riddle books is a little group of children—three girls and three boys decide to form a riddle club. Each book is full of the adventures and doings of these six youngsters, but as an added attraction each book is filled with a lot of the best riddles you ever heard.

THE RIDDLE CLUB AT HOME

An absorbing tale that all boys and girls will enjoy reading. How the members of the club fixed up a clubroom in the Larue barn, and how they, later on, helped solve a most mysterious happening, and how one of the members won a valuable prize, is told in a manner to please every young reader.

THE RIDDLE CLUB IN CAMP

The club members went into camp on the edge of a beautiful lake. Here they had rousing good times swimming, boating and around the campfire. They fell in with a mysterious old man known as The Hermit of Triangle Island. Nobody knew his real name or where he came from until the propounding of a riddle solved these perplexing questions.

THE RIDDLE CLUB THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

This volume takes in a great number of winter sports, including skating and sledding and the building of a huge snowman. It also gives the particulars of how the club treasurer lost the dues entrusted to his care and what the melting of the great snowman revealed.

THE RIDDLE CLUB AT SUNRISE BEACH

This volume tells how the club journeyed to the seashore and how they not only kept up their riddles but likewise had good times on the sand and on the water. Once they got lost in a fog and are marooned on an island. Here they made a discovery that greatly pleased the folks at home.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

THE JERRY TODD SERIES

By LEO EDWARDS

Illustrated. Individual Colored Wrappers For Each Story
Every Volume Complete in Itself

Detective stories for boys! Jerry Todd and his trusty pals solve many a baffling mystery in their home town, much to the amusement of all who read of their adventures.

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY

Having been duly appointed "Juvenile Jupiter Detectives" Jerry Todd and his trusty pals little realize how fast things are going to happen. First comes the amazing adventure in the museum in Tutter College. Did the mummy actually whisper? And did it later vanish of its own accord?

JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT

Cats by the dozens; cats by the hundreds; and most important of all, a mysterious five-hundred dollar rose-colored cat. Then comes the lamentable accident to Lady Victoria's aristocratic tail; the operation; the overdose of chloroform; the funeral. There is a laugh on every page.

JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE

Jerry Todd and his pals set themselves up in the show business by transforming a disused clay scow of Mr. Todd's into a floating theatre. And a very wonderful show it is! Certainly it leads the boys into exceptional adventures.

JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN

That strange hen? Why does it waltz? And what is the secret of the prowling peril? Then, even as the Hindu had earlier died so quickly and mysteriously, the boys' old friend disappears. Then comes the final ludicrous climax.

JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG

Jerry Todd and his chums leagued together to help another boy save a peculiar invention of his father's, a talking frog, from thieving hands,—wait breathlessly in the lonely brick house where the puzzle maker had met with such a strange death. Fun and mystery here!

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

Charles Erickson
55 Surrey St.,
San Francisco California
Feb. 13, 1928

20¢

From Ma to
Charlie -
Christmass, 1927

Book No. 18 -
Erickson's Library

DON STURDY IN THE TOMBS OF GOLD

VICTOR APPLETON

AUTHOR OF TOM SWIFT Books

GROSSET & DUNLAP